NAVIGATING THE GIG ECONOMY: BALANCING PROSPECTS AND PROBLEMS FOR GIG WORKERS

Dr. Rethy B. Menon

Department of Commerce and Management Amrita School of Arts, Humanities, and Commerce
Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham
Karnataka, India rethyneeraj@gmail.com

P P. Megha Muthamma

Department of Commerce and Management Amrita School of Arts, Humanities, and Commerce
Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham
Karnataka, India mmegha854@gmail.com

Abstract—The growth of the gig sector, which provides flex- ibility, freedom, and new chances, has completely changed the way individuals work and make a living. A sizeable section of the worldwide workforce is made up of gig workers, sometimes referred to as freelancers, independent contractors, or platform workers. For those looking for flexible work schedules and business chances, the gig economy offers encouraging opportu- nities. The absence of work benefits, inconsistent income, and limited professional development also present serious issues. To solve these issues and foster an atmosphere that encourages fair treatment, social protection, and chances for growth within the gig economy, policymakers, employers, and gig platforms must work together. By doing this, we can ensure that gig workers' future is more diverse and sustainable.
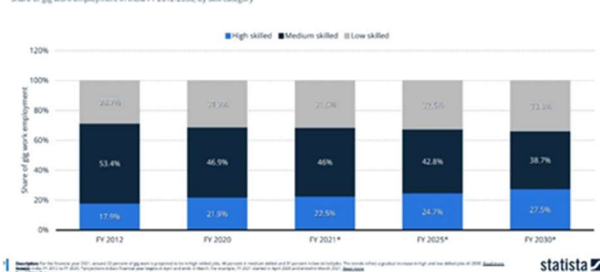
Index Terms—Gig workers, Gig Sector, Limited social security, Unequal pay, Flexibility, Autonomy

I. INTRODUCTION

The freelance economy is the global key and disruptive element in the modern work sector. This paradigm shift is characterized by the expansion of temporary, adaptable, and project-oriented employment models made possible by innovations in technology and digital channels. As a result, traditional notions of employment are being challenged, and individuals are increasingly engaging in independent and freelance work across various sectors and occupations. The gig economy has the potential to add USD Dollar 2.7 USD trillion Dollar to the global GDP by 2025. However, the rise of the gig economy has also raised concerns about the possibility of mistreatment and unstable incomes as well as the lack of job security and perks for freelancers. The gig economy provides a comprehensive analysis of the evolution in the United States. Examining the frequency and features of alternative work arrangements, such as freelancers, available staff members, and short-term agency employees using data from the Existing Market Survey's Contingency Labor Supplement. The substantial increase in alternative work arrangement rises in such agreements from 10.1 percent in 2005 to 15.8 percent in 2015 as a proportion of workers. (Katz and Krueger, 2016). Gig Economy develops a framework that helps in understanding the different dimensions

of the gig economy. They argue for a multidisciplinary approach that encompasses economic, social, and technological perspectives to fully grasp the complexities of gig work. The framework considers various aspects, including work arrangements, workers' motivations and experiences, labor market dynamics, and policy implications, providing a comprehensive understanding of the gig economy phenomenon. (Wood et al., 2019). The contribution of online venues to the globalization of freelance work. Digital platforms have created new opportunities for individuals in emerging economies to participate in the global labor market as micro-providers. The research examines the implications of this trend for workers, including issues of income, access to markets, and the potential for economic development in these regions. (Lehdonvirta and Ka¨ssi, 2018). The gig economy has gained significant traction in India, transforming the country's labor market, and providing new avenues of work and income generation. The Indian gig economy encompasses a wide range of sectors, including transportation, delivery services, e-commerce, freelance work, and online marketplaces. The proliferation of digital platforms and increased internet penetration has facilitated the rise of gig work, enabling individuals to connect with potential employers and customers. The significant role of the gig economy in providing employment opportunities to a diverse range of workers, including youth, women, and those in rural areas, contributes to income generation and economic growth. (Saha and Chakraborty, 2020). Issues such as regulatory frameworks, worker protections, and social security in the context of gig work. There need for appropriate policies to guarantee freelancers fair wages, proper pay, and social security benefits. (Sundararajan, 2017). In India, the sharing economy, which describes the expanding phenomenon of temporary, adaptable, and independent employment, has gained traction in recent years. According to a study published in the International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications, the gig economy in India is estimated to be worth around 1.5 USD billion Dollar, with a workforce of around 15 million people (Bharathi Devi, 2018). This trend has been fueled by the proliferation of online platforms such as Uber, Ola, Swiggy, and Zomato, which have created new avenues for work and income for millions of Indians.

Source: NITI Aayog

As we can see above, we can know the highly skilled to low skilled data of gig work employment. In the recent year 2021, we can see 22.5 percent of high-skilled workers and low-skilled 31.5 percent and it is predicted till the financial year 2030 when both the high and low skill is increased to 27.5 percent and 33.8 percent respectively. However, the gig economy's growth in India has also raised concerns about the lack of job security and social protections for gig workers. Freelancers in India cannot frequently obtain essential benefits like medical insurance, paid time

off, and savings for retiring, according to research by the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations. (Dasgupta et al., 2018). This has led to calls for greater regulation and protections for gig workers in India. There is a heterogeneous nature of gig work in India, with variations in income levels and worker experiences across different sectors and platforms. (Dutta et al., 2019). Despite these challenges, the gig economy has the potential to create new opportunities for workers in India, particularly in sectors such as transportation, food delivery, and e-commerce. The sharing economy will therefore probably continue to be crucial in forming the future of the Indian labor market in the years to come. The gig economy has witnessed significant growth and impact within the state of Karnataka, India. Home to major cities like Bengaluru, Karnataka has become a hub for technology and innovation, driving the proliferation of gig work across various sectors. The emergence and trends of the gig economy within the state explore their motivations, experiences, and challenges. The influence of Bengaluru's vibrant startup ecosystem, the availability of a skilled workforce, and the presence of technology-enabled platforms in fostering the growth of the gig economy in Karnataka. (Mukherjee et al.,2020). The impact of the sharing economy on job trends and the state's labor force. They analyze data from government reports and surveys to understand the scale and nature of gig work in Karnataka. The gig work has provided opportunities for income generation and improved work-life balance, particularly for skilled professionals and youth in the state. (Nithya et al., 2019). The characteristics and challenges faced by gig workers in the IT industry, including issues related to job security, skill development, and work intensity. The study provides insights into the unique dynamics of the effects of freelance work on both employees and in the field of IT. (Nagabhushana et al., 2020). Freelancers' absurd choices can be explained by behavioral finance. It illustrates how numerous elements affect freelancers as they make decisions about investments. The preference for investments is one of the relevant factor-dependent behavioral financial planning concepts. Freelancers' businesses can meet their monetary, cultural, and emotional needs and live peaceful lives by making sound choices and handling their investments. (Navaneeth and Rethy B Menon, 2018).

II.   RELATED WORK

The gig economy presents a framework that helps understand the gig economy's different dimensions. The authors argue for a multidisciplinary approach that encompasses economic, social, and technological perspectives to fully grasp the complexities of gig work. (Wood et al., 2019). To provide valuable insights into the prevalence, nature, and impacts of the gig economy. Researchers continue to explore this evolving phenomenon; their work contributes to a deeper understanding of the global gig economy and informs policy discussions aimed at promoting fair and inclusive labor practices. (Lehdonvirta and Ka¨ssi, 2018). The dynamics, implications, and challenges of the global gig economy. These studies serve as important resources for policymakers, researchers, and stakeholders seeking to understand and navigate the complexities of the gig economy while promoting fair and inclusive work practices. (Rosenblat and Stark, 2016). This work, article would begin with an introduction that sets the context and

importance of studying the impact of gig work on workers' well-being. It may discuss the growing prevalence of gig work and the potential implications for workers' quality of life. The authors would present the findings of their empirical analysis. They would summarize the key results, including any significant relationships or differences observed between gig work and workers' well-being. They would likely provide statistical evidence, such as regression coefficients, p-values, or effect sizes, to support their findings. (Karina and Olga, 2021) The Indian gig economy represents a dynamic and rapidly expanding segment of the country's labor market. The study examines the growth and characteristics of the gig economy in the Indian context and demonstrates the crucial significance that the gig sector plays in providing employment opportunities to a diverse range of workers, including youth, women, and those in rural areas, contributing to income generation and economic growth. (Saha and Chakraborty, 2020). Moreover, problems such as regulatory frameworks, worker protections, and social security in the context of gig work. The article studies the need for appropriate policies and regulations to ensure freelancers should have decent work conditions, proper pay, and welfare advantages. (Sundararajan, 2017). The examines the growth and impact of the gig economy in the Indian context and analyzes data from government reports, surveys, and interviews to provide insights into the characteristics of gig work and the challenges faced by gig workers in India. (Bhatia and Verma, 2018). The impact of digital platforms, changing employment preferences, and the evolving nature of work on the gig economy. The study highlights the potential benefits of gig work, such as flexibility and income diversification, while addressing concerns related to income volatility, lack of social security, and the need for policy interventions to ensure worker protection. (Srivastava et al., 2020). The study investigates the gig economy's potential to create opportunities for underutilized labor and bridge the gap between skills demand and supply, while also emphasizing the need for effective regulation, social security, and skill development initiatives. (Rana, 2019). In order explores the development and expansion of the sharing economy in India. The authors employ qualitative research methods, including interviews and case studies, to analyze the unique characteristics of gig work. (Arora and Mehta, 2019).

III.   OBJECTIVES
•   To analyze the potential benefits of the gig economy workers
•   To analyze the key problems faced by gig workers.
•   To analyze the significant difference in problems and prospects of gig workers based on gender, education level, type of gig work, marital status, and monthly income.

IV.   SCOPE OF THE STUDY:
The inclination of gig workers for flexible work schedules is one of the most crucial elements in a gig economy. As a result, it is critical to pinpoint the fundamental factors that influence the preferences of gig workers. The study is focused on factors like time, flexibility, relationship, benefits, job security, working conditions, inconsistent income, negotiation, and delayed payments.

V.   PROPOSED   METHODOLOGY

Primary data are the basis of the investigation. The survey includes 150 gig workers in all. Data from individuals was gathered on various gig jobs. The data collection mechanism used is a simple random sampling technique. The simple random technique ensures that each gig worker in the population has an equal chance of being selected for the study. This helps in obtaining a representative sample that accurately reflects the characteristics and experiences of gig workers. Data were collected using a standardized questionnaire. The first part of the questionnaire was regarding the demographic variables, and the second part of the questionnaire was regarding the prospects of the gig workers. The third part of the questionnaire was regarding the problems. On a Likert scale, the questions in the second half and third half of the survey were evaluated from 1(strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The key information gathered was examined using descriptive statistics, T-test, and ANOVA to conclude.

Tools Used:

Prospects

Factors considered for prospects are movement flexibility, relationship, time, and diverse income of the workers.

Problems

Factors considered for problems are lack of benefits, job security, delayed payments, and working conditions of the workers.

VI.   HYPOTHESIS

•   There excess significant differences in the problems of gig workers based on their age, gender, and education.

•   There excess significant differences in the prospects of gig workers based on their age, gender, and education.

VII.   ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE STUDY

TABLE 1:

To determine the level of prospects of gig workers.

To grade the degree of prospects a table has been created. If the mean score falls.

Between the range of (1-25) low, (26-50) moderate, and (51-75) high level.

Descriptive statistics	Prospects
Minimum	33
Maximum	65
Mean	52.02
Standard deviation	5.101

•   **Interpretation:**

Table-1 The gender distribution within a particular population is shown in the table. According to the data, 43 percent of the sample's participants are male and 57 percent are female. This suggests that women make up a significantly larger proportion of the population. The total percentages

indicate that all responses have been taken into account, with men making up 43 percent and women making up the remaining 57 percent. Overall, the table gives a clear picture of how the sample under consideration is split up by gender.

TABLE 2:

To determine the level of problems of gig workers.

To grade the degree of problems a table has been created. If the mean score falls between the range of (1-33.33) low, (33.4-66.7) moderate, and (66.8-100) high level.

Descriptive statistics	Prospects
Minimum	28
Maximum	44
Mean	36.12
Standard deviation	3.346

•   **Interpretation:**

In the above table we can see the analysis of problems. The table shows standard deviation is 3.346 and the mean value is 36.12. According to the table, respondents had a moderate view of the problems of working in the gig economy

TABLE 3:

Factor analysis of gig workers based on prospects:

Factors	Extraction
Movement Flexibility	0.833
Relationship	0.831
Diverse income streams	0.805
Time	0.583

•   **Interpretation:**

Table 3 shows the factor extraction coefficients for each variable under the respective factors. The extraction coefficients indicate the strength and direction of the relationship between each variable and the extracted factor. Higher absolute values of the coefficients suggest a stronger association between the variable and the corresponding factor. The factors selected as prospects are highly contributing to the success of the work of a gig worker. Here according to the result, it is observed that movement flexibility with 0.833 is having the major contribution and relationship factor having 0.831, the recommendation factor having 0.803 then followed by time with the least contribution that is 0.583. So, we can see that freelancers enjoy movement flexibility more in their sector.

TABLE 4:

Factor analysis of gig workers based on Problems

Factors	Extraction
Lack of benefits	0.797
Job security	0.715
Inconsistent Income	0.562
Delay Payments	0.555
Working Conditions	0.537
Negotiation	0.498

• **Interpretation:**

Table 4 shows the extraction coefficients in factor analysis represent the strength of the relationship between the variables and the extracted factors. Higher extraction coefficients indicate a stronger association between the variables and the corresponding factor. Here is an explanation of the extraction coefficients for the factors extracted in the analysis of gig workers' problems. The table specifies that all the factors selected as problems are highly contributing to the work of gig workers. Here according to the result, it is observed that lack of benefit with 0.797 which is high then we can see the job security factor having 0.715, the inconsistent income factor having 0.562, delayed payments having 0.555, the working condition factor with 0.537 then followed by negotiation with least interest that is 0.494. So, we can see that freelancers also have a few problems in their sector.

TABLE 5

Gender of the respondents

The data highlights gender examination of prospects and problems in Mysuru city.

Prospects	Frequency	Mean	Standard deviation	t	p-value
Equal variances assumed	.881	.537	.836	.642	.349
Equal variances not assumed		.537	.849	.632	

• **Interpretation:**

As we can see the table shows that there is no significant difference between the gender among freelancers that impact on prospects. This means that male and female respondents had similar views on the prospects associated with working in the gig sector.

Problems	Frequency	Mean	Standard deviation	t	p-value
Equal variances assumed	2.746	.195	.550	.355	.100
Equal variances not assumed		.195	.555	.352	

• **Interpretation:**

As we can see the table shows that there is no significant difference between the gender among freelancers that impact on problems. This means that male and female respondents had similar views on the problems associated with working in the gig sector.

TABLE 6

Age of the respondents

The data highlights the age and problems in Mysuru city.   examination   of   prospects

Prospects	Sum Of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	70.189	4	17.547	.670	.614
Within Groups	3795.811	145	26.178		
Total	3866.000	149			

- **Interpretation:**

As we can see the table shows that there is no significant difference between the age groups of freelancers that impact on prospects. This means that respondents across different age groups had similar views on the prospects associated with working in the gig economy.

Problems	Sum Of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	87.623	4	21.906	2.010	.096
Within Groups	1580.217	145	10.898		
Total	1667.840	149			

- **Interpretation:**

As we can see the table shows that there is no significant difference between the age groups of freelancers that impacts on problems. This means that respondents across different age groups had similar views on problems associated with working in the gig economy.

TABLE 7

Education of the respondents

The data highlights education examination of prospects and problems in Mysuru city.

Prospects	Sum Of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	59.306	3	19.769	.758	.519
Within Groups	3806.694	146	26.073		
Total	3866.000	149			

- **Interpretation:**

As we can see, the table shows that there is no significant difference between freelancers' education levels that impacts prospects. This means that respondents across different educa- tion levels had similar views on the prospects associated with working in the gig economy.

Problems	Sum Of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	94.172	3	31.391	2.912	.036
Within Groups	1573.668	146	10.779		
Total	1667.840	149			

• **Interpretation:**

As we can see, the table shows that there is a significant difference between freelancers' education levels that impacts a problem. This means that respondents across different edu- cation levels have different views on the problems associated with working in the gig economy.

VIII.   TESTING HYPOTHESIS

The first hypothesis is completely rejected as there is no significant difference based on age, gender, and education level. The second hypothesis is partially accepted as there is a significant difference based on the education level.

IX.   FINDINGS

The findings of the study are:

• The study says that prospects are enjoyed at a high level and problems are at a moderate level

• Freelancers value movement flexibility in their work arrangements more.

• The study says gig workers often lack job security and financial stability due to their status as contractors. This can lead to income instability and difficulty making ends meet.

• We can also see those factors like gender, age, and education level as no significant difference in prospects.

• We can see significant differences in education level in the problem.

• Gigs must build strong relationships and maintain good communication with clients or customers.

• Positive reviews and recommendations from clients or customers play a significant role in gig workers' prospects

• The fluctuating nature of gig work can result in periods of low income or no work at all, which can further exacerbate financial insecurity for gig workers.

• The lack of employment benefits and protections for gig workers highlights the need for greater regulation and protection in the sector.

X.   SUGGESTION

• It is possible to classify different types of freelancers to access data on their skills in the field.

• Gigs may be able to find employment through temporary positions and freelance work possibilities.

- Freelancers deal with uncertainty in their field and it may lead to loss of work and income, hence they should develop a variety of skills.

- Gig employees can identify their strengths with their experience, knowledge, and skills, and gain a foothold by recognizing their areas of expertise and creating sustainable career options.

- Work done in the service requires developing different processes and a professional attitude.

- The job requires someone who can get results easily, jobs with professionals are more in demand.

- The freelancers must establish a positive attitude by providing prompt and satisfactory service to create future gig work for themself.

- Each freelancer must develop a profile for themselves to be recognized. They must connect with on-demand gig working agencies, job boards, and sites to do this.

XI.   CONCLUSION

The problems and prospects of gig workers present a complex and multifaceted landscape. On one hand, the gig economy offers flexibility, entrepreneurial opportunities, and a chance to supplement income. However, it also brings forth several challenges that need to be addressed. One of the main problems faced by gig workers is the lack of employment benefits and protections traditionally provided by traditional employment arrangements. They often lack access to healthcare benefits, retirement plans, and job security. Additionally, gig workers face income volatility, as their earnings are often unpredictable and can fluctuate significantly. There is an opportunity to address the problems and create a more equitable and sustainable gig economy. By implementing appropriate policies, fostering collaboration between stakeholders, and promoting worker rights, we can strive towards a future where gig workers enjoy fair treatment, improved working conditions, and enhanced prospects for economic well-being.

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