

Exploring the Challenges and Uncertainties faced by Gig Workers

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Abstract

The goal of this study is to examine the wide range of difficulties and unknowns that gig workers encounter in the quickly changing gig economy. The lack of benefits, unstable employment, and income instability are just a few of the aspects of these issues that are examined in this research. It also looks at the social and psychological effects of gig labor, including difficulties striking a work-life balance, loneliness, and unhappiness with one's job. Additionally, the study looks into how technology might help gig workers or make their struggles even more difficult. It emphasizes the necessity of business policies and legislative actions that give gig workers' rights and protections first priority. The need of comprehending and resolving the difficulties and uncertainties experienced by gig workers is emphasized in the paper's conclusion in order to create a just and inclusive labor market in the digital era. This research adds to the ongoing discussion about the gig economy and how it affects workers' lives by illuminating the nuances of freelance labor. The results bear noteworthy implications for regulators, businesses, and workers in their endeavours to negotiate the dynamic terrain of the gig economy.

Keywords: Health, safety, legal access, social-status, delivery service, legislation, fatigue.

Introduction

The gig economy, sometimes referred to as gig work, has become a well-liked employment model in recent years. It is typified by independent, flexible, and short-term job assignments that are frequently made possible by digital platforms. For those looking for variety in their income sources, freedom, and flexibility, gig labor has offered a wealth of options. It is not without difficulties and unknowns, though. The purpose of this introduction is to give a quickrundown of the main problems that gig workers have as well as the nuances related to their employment status. Numerous occupations fall under the umbrella of the gig economy, such as food delivery, ride-hailing, freelance work, and on-demand services. Although working from anywhere and having flexible schedules are benefits of this kind of business, there are a number of drawbacks as well. The absence of benefits and job security is one of the biggest problems gig workers confront. Benefits like paid time off, retirement plans, and health insurance are frequently available to traditional employees.

Gig workers, however, usually do not have access to these benefits, which makes them susceptible in the event of emergencies or unanticipated events. The unpredictable nature of gig workers' pay presents another difficulty. Gig workers' pay are determined by the quantity and nature of employment they secure, as opposed to traditional jobs that have a set salary. Because of this, gig workers may experience income volatility, which makes it challenging for them to budget and organize their finances. Furthermore, a vast pool of competitors often competes with gig workers, which can lower earnings and make it difficult to have a steady source of income. Another area of confusion is the employment status of gig workers. Due to their status as independent contractors, many gig workers are not granted the same legal rights and protections as regular employees. This designation has generated discussion and controversy, with some contending that in order to be eligible for the benefits and protections that come with that position, gig workers ought to be categorized as employees.

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Reclassifying gig workers as employees, however, can potentially have an adverse effect on gig companies' economic models by driving up expenses. Furthermore, issues with their working conditions are a common problem for gig workers. Finally, the rapid expansion of the gig economy has resulted in a lack of control and regulation, which has created a situation where the rights and protections of workers are not always guaranteed. In summary, the gig economy offers a distinct work model with benefits and drawbacks.

Kaine *et al.* (2017) in his study on "The future of gig work: Challenges and opportunities" This Research examines the future of the gig economy and its implications for workers, employers, and society. The authors argue that the gig economy is likely to continue to grow and diversify, requiring novel approaches to managing work and employment relationships. The Research asserts that traditional models of employment and social protection will need to be adapted to accommodate flexible work arrangements and new forms of work organization. The authors emphasize that gig work provides opportunities for innovation and entrepreneurship and requires policies that balance flexibility and security for workers. Watkins (2017) in his study on "The Political Economy of the Gig Economy" This article provides a critical analysis of the gig economy from a political economy perspective, arguing that it reflects broader trends in neoliberal capitalism. The article highlights the ways in which the gig economy entails forms of exploitation and precarity that are rooted in neoliberal political and economic structures. Digital platforms facilitate the commodification of labour and the concentration of wealth and power, while workers are subject to insecure and unstable working conditions. The article calls for a broader social movement that addresses the root causes of these issues and proposes alternative visions of work and society. Jha and Soundararajan (2018) in their study on "Workers on the Move: The Gig Economy in India" This Research provides an overview of the gig economy in India, discussing its growth, challenges, and policy implications. The research argues that gig work has emerged as an important form of employment in India, and has the potential to create new opportunities for workers. However, the gig economy also presents significant challenges, such as precarity, low pay, and lack of social protections. The article suggests that addressing these challenges requires innovative policy solutions that balance flexibility and security for workers. Sharma (2018) in his study on "Gig Economy and the Employability of Indian Women: Issues and Challenges" This Research examines the issues and challenges faced by Indian women in the gig economy and their implications for employability. The research finds that women often face additional barriers to participation in the gig economy, such as cultural norms, lack of skills, and discrimination.

The article argues for the development of policies that promote gender equity in the gig economy and increase women's access to training and other supports. The research on the obstacles and uncertainty encountered by gig workers is crucial. Work is now structured and carried out in a very different way as a result of the gig economy's profound impact on traditional forms of employment. Although this has given rise to new issues and uncertainties that need to be understood and solved, it has also offered opportunities for workers. The gig economy is now a vital engine driving the expansion of the world economy. Thus, from a societal standpoint, it is imperative to comprehend the difficulties gig workers have since they affect not just the lives of the workers but also the larger labor market and economy. Understanding the obstacles and uncertainty that gig workers confront is critical for identifying viable solutions to these issues. This may result in the creation of laws and rules that uphold the legal rights of independent contractors, encourage job stability, and grant access to necessary benefits and safeguards. Additionally, it can aid in the advancement of knowledge on the effects of technology innovation on labor and employment in society. Examining the difficulties and uncertainty gig workers encounter is important because it can contribute to the development of a more just, inclusive, and sustainable work environment in society.

The study on exploring the challenges and uncertainties faced by gig workers has a broad scope, as it seeks to examine the underlying factors that contribute to the challenges and uncertainties experienced by gig workers. The study explored various aspects of gig work, including the nature of work, work conditions, income, social protections, and worker rights, among others. The study is focus on gig workers from a range of sectors, including transportation, delivery, cleaning, and freelance work. This broad scope is necessary because the experiences of gig workers can vary depending on the sector they work in, the geographical location, and demographic factors. Therefore, the study is to examine the experiences of gig workers from different backgrounds to gain a broader understanding of the challenges they face.

Moreover, the study has a quantitative component to provide a picture of the challenges experienced by gig workers. The quantitative component involves surveys and statistical analysis of data related to gig work and the experiences of gig workers. The study has an Indian perspective, considering the experiences of gig workers across Districts of Tamil Nadu with the following objectives.

- Categorize respondents according to their health and physical well-being in a distribution format.
- Assess and analyze the mental well-being of respondents to gain a comprehensive understanding.
- Create a distribution profile of gig workers based on

their mental well-being status.

- Classify respondents according to their social status to generate a distribution profile.
- Explore avenues of legal and access to legal protection of the respondents.

Methodology

Research design: To observe and analyze the current research, a descriptive research design will be adopted. The researcher employed a descriptive research design to emphasise the qualities and importance of several criteria. This approach seeks to methodically gather data in order to characterise a phenomenon and comprehend the indicated population used in the study.

Universe and sampling: Gig workers, who include freelancers, independent contractors, and part-time workers in various industries, face unique challenges and uncertainties related to their work. These challenges include variable income, lack of benefits, job insecurity, and difficulties accessing training and career development opportunities. The Universe of the Research study connected all gig workers in Tamil Nadu from the Districts of Chennai, Vellore and Tirupattur. The Sample Size of the Research was 50 Gig workers questionnaires.

Tools for data collection: The researcher was used questionnaires to collect data from the gig workers in the districts of Chennai, Vellore, and Tirupattur. The research was used in the Likert scale to study the challenges and uncertainties faced by the gig workers. The Likert scale is used as a measuring instrument to determine the average or sum of the questionnaire responses across the separate questions that are being given.

Results and discussion

The presented Table 1 shows that less than half (48%) of the respondents have a high-level of health and physical well-being as gig workers. less than half (48%) of the respondents have a high-level of mental well-being as gig workers. more than half (52%) of the respondents have a high-level of Social Status, less than half (48%) of the respondents have a high-level of reliance on technology. less than half (48%) of the respondents have a high-level of access to legal and legal protections. half (50%) of the respondents denote a high influence on Challenges and Uncertainties faced by Gig Workers. And more than one-fourth (28%) of the respondents have a low level of health and physical well-being as gig workers. more than one-fourth (30%) of the respondents have a low level of mental well-being as gig workers. more than one-fourth (26%) of the respondents have a low-level Social Status of the Gig Workers.

more one-than one fourth (26%) of the respondents have a low level of reliance on technology. Less than one-third (32%) of the respondents have a low level of access to legal and legal protections. more than one-fourth (28%) of the respondents had low influence by the Challenges and Uncertainties faced by Gig Workers. A little less than one-fourth (24%) of the respondents have a medium level of health and physical well-being as gig workers. A little more than two-tenth (22%) of the respondents have a medium level of mental well-being as gig workers. More than two-tenth (22%) of the respondents have a medium level of social status. more one-than one fourth (26%) of the respondents have a medium level of reliance on technology. And two-tenth (20%) of the respondents have a medium level of legal and access to legal protection.

The presented Table 2 reveals that there is no significant difference between male and female respondents with regard to the dimensions of the study which includes: Health and Physical Well Being of the Gig Workers, Mental wellbeing of Gig Workers, Social Status of the Gig Workers, Reliance on Technology of the Gig Workers, Legal and Access to Legal Protection for the Gig Workers, and Overall Challenges and Uncertainties faced by Gig Workers.

Ho: There is no significant difference between gender of the respondent and mentalwellbeing.

H1: There is a significant difference between gender of the respondent and mentalwellbeing.

Result: The t-test was applied. It is found that there is no significant difference between the gender of the respondents and mental wellbeing. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted.

The presented Table 2 reveals that there is no significant difference among the educational qualification of the respondents and the dimensions of the study based on their expectations on the health and physical well-being of the gig workers, mental wellbeing of gig workers, social status of the gig workers, reliance on technology of the gig workers, legal and access to legal protection for the gig workers, and overall challenges and uncertainties faced by gig workers.

Ho: There is no significant difference among the educational qualification of the respondent and health and physical well-being.

H1: There is a significant difference among the educational qualification of the respondent and health and physical well-being.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents based on the implications challenges and uncertainties faced by gig workers.

| Factors | High | Percentage | Medium | Percentage | Low | Percentage |
|---|------|------------|--------|------------|-----|------------|
| Health and Physical Well Being of the Gig Workers | 24 | 48 | 12 | 24 | 14 | 28 |
| Mental wellbeing of Gig Workers | 24 | 48 | 11 | 22 | 15 | 30 |
| Social Status of the Gig Workers | 26 | 52 | 11 | 22 | 13 | 26 |
| Reliance on Technology | 24 | 48 | 13 | 26 | 13 | 26 |
| Legal and Access to Legal Protection for the Gig Workers | 24 | 48 | 10 | 20 | 16 | 32 |
| Overall Challenges and Uncertainties faced by Gig Workers | 25 | 50 | 11 | 22 | 14 | 28 |

Table 2. Distribution of the respondents based on their gender with regard to the Health and Physical Well Being of the Gig Workers.

| Variable | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | df | Statistical Inference |
|---|--------|----------------|-----------------|--------|-------------------------------------|
| Health and Physical Well Being of the Gig Workers | | | | | |
| Male (37) | 43.68 | 6.900 | 1.134 | 48 | 't'=0.757 P>0.05 Not Significant |
| Female (13) | 43.00 | 6.272 | 1.739 | 22.992 | |
| Mental wellbeing of Gig Workers | | | | | |
| Male (37) | 42.95 | 7.505 | 1.234 | 48 | 't'=0.684 P>0.05 Not Significant |
| Female (13) | 42.00 | 6.042 | 1.676 | 25.994 | |
| Social Status of the Gig Workers | | | | | |
| Male (37) | 43.97 | 7.388 | 1.215 | 48 | 't'=0.450 P>0.05 Not Significant |
| Female (13) | 42.15 | 7.437 | 2.063 | 20.926 | |
| Reliance on Technology of the Gig Workers | | | | | |
| Male (37) | 41.78 | 7.020 | 1.154 | 48 | 't'=0.589 P>0.05 Not Significant |
| Female (13) | 40.62 | 5.424 | 1.504 | 27.147 | |
| Legal and Access to Legal Protection for the Gig Workers | | | | | |
| Male (37) | 41.81 | 7.870 | 1.294 | 48 | 't'=0.887 P>0.05 Not Significant |
| Female (13) | 42.15 | 6.012 | 1.667 | 27.480 | |
| Overall Challenges and Uncertainties faced by Gig Workers | | | | | |
| Male (37) | 214.19 | 32.455 | 5.336 | 48 | 't'=0.666 P>0.05 Not Significant |
| Female (13) | 209.92 | 23.275 | 6.455 | 29.419 | |

Result: The F-Test was applied and it was found that there is no significant difference among the educational qualification of the respondents and health and physical well-being. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted.

The presented Table 3 reveals that there is no significant difference among the type of delivery services of the respondents and the dimensions of the study based on their expectations on the health and physical well-being of the gig workers, mental wellbeing of gig workers, social status of the gig workers, reliance on technology of the gig workers, legal and access to legal protection for the gig workers, and overall challenges and uncertainties faced by gig workers.

Ho: There is no significant difference among the type of delivery service of the respondent and mental well-being.

H1: There is a significant difference among the type of delivery service of the respondent and mental well-being.

Result: The F-Test was applied and it was found that there is no significant difference among the type of delivery service of the respondent and health and physical well-being. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted.

Table 3. Distribution of the respondents based on their education with regard to the Challenges and Uncertainties faced by Gig Workers.

| Variables | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Statistical Inference |
|---|----------------|----------------|----|-------------|-------|----------------------------------|
| Health and Physical WellBeing of the Gig Workers | Between Groups | 164.856 | 4 | 41.214 | .916 | F=0.463P>0.05 Not Significant |
| | Within Groups | 2025.644 | 45 | 45.014 | | |
| | Total | 2190.500 | 49 | | | |
| Mental wellbeing of Gig Workers | Between Groups | 298.087 | 4 | 74.522 | 1.541 | F=0.207P>0.05 Not Significant |
| | Within Groups | 2176.413 | 45 | 48.365 | | |
| | Total | 2474.500 | 49 | | | |
| Social Status of the Gig Workers | Between Groups | 322.921 | 4 | 80.730 | 1.554 | F=0.203P>0.05 Not Significant |
| | Within Groups | 2337.579 | 45 | 51.946 | | |
| | Total | 2660.500 | 49 | | | |
| Reliance on Technology of the Gig Workers | Between Groups | 207.503 | 4 | 51.876 | 1.208 | F=0.321P>0.05 Not Significant |
| | Within Groups | 1932.977 | 45 | 42.955 | | |
| | Total | 2140.480 | 49 | | | |
| Legal and Access to Legal Protection for the Gig Workers | Between Groups | 159.041 | 4 | 39.760 | .714 | F=0.587P>0.05 Not Significant |
| | Within Groups | 2505.459 | 45 | 55.677 | | |
| | Total | 2664.500 | 49 | | | |
| Overall Challenges and Uncertainties faced by Gig Workers | Between Groups | 5098.870 | 4 | 1274.717 | 1.452 | F=0.233P>0.05 Not Significant |
| | Within Groups | 39496.810 | 45 | 877.707 | | |
| | Total | 44595.680 | 49 | | | |

Suggestions

Suggestions to the employer:

- Offer transparent and competitive pay structures to ensure fair compensation and alleviate unpredictable income for gig workers.
- Promote work-life balance by setting reasonable workload expectations and encouraging breaks, leading to higher productivity and better-quality work.
- Establish open communication channels and encourage regular feedback to foster a sense of community, growth, and development for gig workers.

Suggestions to the gig worker:

- Connect with fellow gig workers and join online communities for support and valuable insights.
- Diversify your income by exploring multiple platforms or learning new skills to reduce reliance on a single source.
- Establish boundaries, prioritize self-care, and maintain work-life balance to prevent burnout and ensure overall well-being.

Suggestions to the policy makers:

- Update labor laws to protect gig workers' rights, including minimum wage, overtime pay, and benefits, to address income instability.
- Promote platform transparency and fair practices, such as clear algorithms and performance evaluation criteria, to empower gig workers in decision-making and negotiation.
- Invest in training and development programs for gig workers, enabling skill acquisition, technology adaptation, and career advancement, to foster a resilient and sustainable gig workforce.

Conclusion

Exploring the Challenges and Uncertainties Faced by Gig Workers exposes a complicated terrain in which the benefits of flexibility and freedom are balanced against the disadvantages of job insecurity, a lack of benefits, and the possibility of exploitation. The Gig Economy has definitely upset traditional employment paradigms, allowing workers to pursue varied career paths while balancing their professional and personal lives. However, this new type of work emphasizes the need for a rethinking of labour rights,

safeguards, and social safety nets in the modern economy.

Table 4. Distribution of the respondents based on their type of delivery servicewith regard to the challenges and uncertainties faced by gig workers.

| Variables | | Sum ofSquares | df | Mean Square | F | Statistical Inference |
|--|----------------|---------------|----|-------------|-------|--------------------------------------|
| Health and Physical WellBeing of the Gig Workers | Between Groups | 154.107 | 6 | 25.684 | .542 | F=0.773 P>0.05 Not Significant |
| | WithinGroups | 2036.393 | 43 | 47.358 | | |
| | Total | 2190.500 | 49 | | | |
| Mental wellbeing of Gig Workers | Between Groups | 342.032 | 6 | 57.005 | 1.149 | F=0.351P>0.05 Not Significant |
| | WithinGroups | 2132.468 | 43 | 49.592 | | |
| | Total | 2474.500 | 49 | | | |
| Social Status ofthe Gig Workers | Between Groups | 430.421 | 6 | 71.737 | 1.383 | F=0.243 P>0.05 Not Significant |
| | WithinGroups | 2230.079 | 43 | 51.862 | | |
| | Total | 2660.500 | 49 | | | |
| Reliance on Technology ofthe Gig Workers | Between Groups | 312.608 | 6 | 52.101 | 1.226 | F=0.312P>0.05 Not Significant |
| | WithinGroups | 1827.872 | 43 | 42.509 | | |
| | Total | 2140.480 | 49 | | | |
| Legal and Access to LegalProtection for the Gig Workers | Between Groups | 45.694 | 6 | 7.616 | .125 | F=0.993 P>0.05 Not Significant |
| | WithinGroups | 2618.806 | 43 | 60.902 | | |
| | Total | 2664.500 | 49 | | | |
| Overall Challenges andUncertainties faced by Gig Workers | Between Groups | 4375.620 | 6 | 729.270 | .780 | F=0.590 P>0.05 Not Significant |
| | WithinGroups | 40220.060 | 43 | 935.350 | | |
| | Total | 44595.680 | 49 | | | |

To address the challenges and uncertainties encountered by gig workers, it is critical to recognize the value of fair remuneration, consistent income, and suitable benefits. Policymakers, corporations, and society as a whole must collaborate to find solutions that ensure gig workers are valued for their contributions while also protecting them from exploitation. This could include changing the employer- employee relationship, enacting new legislation, or even reconsidering the definition of a "job" in the context of a shifting labour market.

To conclude, the Gig Economy has caused enormous changes in the way we work, and it is critical to address the issues and uncertainties that gig workers face head on. By creating a more egalitarian and supportive environment for these individuals, we may maximize the Gig Economy's potential while protecting the well-being and financial stability of those who choose or are required to engage in it. Ultimately, this will help to create a more inclusive and prosperous society for everyone.

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