



Beyond Traditional Jobs: An Analysis of the Gig Economy's Impact on Youth Employment in India

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ABSTRACT:

The emergence of the gig economy has far-reaching implications for people, companies, and economies. It changes the employment relationship and shifts workforces. This study is important because it examines the impact of gig work on workers' economic security, career development, and social protection. From a business viewpoint, it analyses cost benefits, labour flexibility, and issues surrounding employee retention and service quality. Policymakers also need to take into account the implications of gig work, such as labour legislation, tax policies, and worker protection. Based on international trends and industry specific case studies, the study offers a glimpse into the future of the gig economy and how it can influence employment structures across the world. The gig economy has changed the way people work by creating flexible employment opportunities through digital platforms. This study examines its impact on youth employment, career development, economic security, and the future of work, while highlighting the need for better worker protection and supportive government policies.

KEY WORDS : Gig economy, Youth Employment, Digital Platforms, Flexible Work, Employment Opportunities,

1.Introduction

The gig economy is now a significant component of contemporary job markets. Young people have flexible income options because to digital platforms like Uber, Swiggy, and Zomato. Gig labour is becoming popular among students and young people without jobs because it provides flexible schedules and prospects for quick money. (Niels van Doorn & Shapiro, 2023) The gig economy has become a revolutionary force in recent years, changing conventional employment paradigms and providing young people with previously unheard-of opportunities.

This economic environment, which is typified by temporary contracts and freelance work, enables young people to use their abilities and creativity in novel ways, frequently getting around the limitations of traditional job markets. In addition to making a wide range of gig opportunities more accessible, the emergence of digital platforms has also encouraged



young workers to adopt an entrepreneurial mindset. These people encounter a range of experiences that promote resilience and adaptability as they work in a variety of fields, such as ride-sharing and graphic design.

2. Objective

- To research whether gig work offers long-term career opportunities and the expansion of the gig economy in India
- To examine income satisfaction among gig workers.
- To analyse the impact of gig work on youth employment

3. Literature review:

(Gleim et al., 2019) This article explores the significant roles that stakeholders play in the gig economy and emphasizes the ways in which different factors impact the gig economy's expansion and significance in both the Indian and global contexts. The gig economy's reach extends beyond the service sector to the manufacturing sector at a faster rate, according to a description of recent literature and market research.

(Roy & Shrivastava, 2020) The article explains that the gig economy is growing rapidly in India and across the world, supported by digital platforms. It provides workers with flexible jobs, opportunities to work in their areas of interest, and access to global employment. At the same time, freelancers face challenges such as low pay, lack of benefits, and job insecurity. Companies benefit from lower costs and easy access to skilled talent, but they must address concerns related to data security and privacy. The article also suggests that more research is needed on protecting freelancers' rights, ensuring fair payments, and helping gig workers build strong personal brands for long-term career success.

(Stefano, 2016) People think that job markets are going through a big change right now, where temporary work arranged through online platforms is replacing or adding to regular jobs. However, it is hard to tell how big and how different these changes are because standard job market statistics and economic indicators are not good at measuring this "gig work."

(Deshbhartara, n.d.) The effects of the gig economy on labour are significant, presenting opportunities as well as substantial threats. Job insecurity is perhaps one of the most critical issues. In contrast to conventional employment, gig workers do not have open-ended contracts, meaning that their employment is extremely insecure. This is especially true in industries where demand does not follow predictable patterns, leaving employees vulnerable to no constant flow of projects or pay.

4. Research Question

- Does the gig economy reduce youth unemployment?
- What are the major problems faced by gig workers?
- Are young workers satisfied with gig jobs?

4.1 Does the gig economy reduce youth unemployment?

By giving young people flexible and accessible employment options, the gig economy can contribute to a decrease in youth unemployment. Young people can more easily enter the workforce and make money because many gig jobs, like freelancing, delivery services, and online work, require little experience. These positions also assist young workers in gaining real-world experience and practical skills.



4.2 What are the major problems faced by gig workers?

Another challenge is the absence of employee benefits such as health insurance, paid leave, pensions, and retirement plans. Gig workers may also experience long working hours, intense competition, and pressure from platform ratings and reviews. In addition, they often have limited legal protection and fewer opportunities for career growth and professional development. These issues can affect the financial stability and overall well-being of gig workers, making gig employment less secure than traditional forms of work.

4.3 Are young workers satisfied with gig jobs?

Young workers have mixed opinions about gig jobs. Many of them like gig work because it offers flexible working hours and the freedom to choose when and where they want to work. This flexibility helps them balance their studies, personal responsibilities, and other jobs while earning additional income. Gig work is also easy to start because most digital platforms do not require high educational qualifications or previous work experience. As a result, many students and young people use gig jobs to earn money, gain practical experience, and improve their skills. However, they also face challenges such as irregular income, lack of job security, and the absence of benefits like health insurance and paid leave. Therefore, the satisfaction of young gig workers depends on their personal needs and career goals. While many see gig work as a good source of temporary income and experience, others believe that better worker protection and employment benefits are necessary to make gig work a more secure career option.

5. Employment Opportunities and Career Prospects

5.1 Gig work offers long-term career opportunities

Gig workers are not only freelancers anymore. Many people who already have full-time jobs also do gig work to earn extra money. Some even plan to leave their regular jobs and work as freelancers full-time. The gig economy also helps people find work when permanent jobs are difficult to get. More companies are now using gig workers. Businesses want skilled workers while keeping costs low, so hiring freelancers is a good option. Freelancers often prefer this type of work because it gives them more freedom and allows them to choose projects they enjoy. Companies benefit because they can quickly hire experts, save money, and bring in new ideas.

Jobs like employee training, customer service, website development, and technical support have long used freelancers. Today, many companies keep only a few permanent employees in these areas and hire outside experts for the rest of the work. This helps businesses get specialized skills and up-to-date knowledge at a lower cost.

5.2 Job opportunities in India

The gig economy can create many job opportunities in India. At present, the country is facing a shortage of jobs despite economic growth. Gig work can help young people find employment and earn an income. It also benefits women because they can choose flexible working hours and work from different locations, making it easier for them to balance work and personal responsibilities. For companies, hiring gig workers can help reduce costs and manage their workforce more efficiently.

5.3 Gig economy increases employment opportunities

The gig economy increases employment opportunities by creating flexible and easily accessible jobs for many people. It allows individuals to earn income through online platforms by working as freelancers, delivery partners, drivers, tutors, designers, and other service providers. This type of work is especially helpful for students, women, homemakers, retired people, and those who cannot find full-time jobs. The gig economy also helps people develop new skills, gain work experience, and earn additional income according to their available time. As digital platforms continue to grow, the gig economy plays an important role in reducing unemployment and supporting economic growth by providing more job opportunities to a large number of people.



6. Youth Perspectives and Work Preferences

6.1 Satisfaction of Young Gig Workers

Young workers have different opinions about gig jobs. Many of them are satisfied because gig work offers flexible working hours, allows them to earn extra income, and gives them the freedom to choose the type of work they want. It is also helpful for students and fresh graduates who want to gain work experience and develop new skills.

However, many young workers are also concerned about the lack of job security, irregular income, and the absence of benefits such as health insurance, paid leave, and retirement plans. Since gig work depends on customer demand and platform ratings, earnings are often uncertain. Therefore, the satisfaction of young gig workers depends on their personal needs and career goals. Overall, the gig economy provides valuable employment opportunities, but improving worker protection and employment benefits can increase the satisfaction and well-being of young gig workers.

6.2. Youth prefer flexibility in work

Young people prefer flexible work because it allows them to balance their personal life, education, and career. The gig economy gives them the freedom to choose their working hours, work from different locations, and take projects based on their interests and skills. Many young workers value independence and do not want to be limited to a fixed office schedule. Flexible work also helps them earn extra income, gain experience in different fields, and improve their skills. As a result, the gig economy has become an attractive employment option for today's youth, supporting both their career growth and work-life balance.

7. Challenges and Future Directions

7.1 Major Problems Faced by Gig Workers

Gig workers face several challenges in their daily work. One of the biggest problems is the lack of job security, as their income depends on the availability of work and customer demand. Unlike permanent employees, most gig workers do not receive benefits such as health insurance, paid leave, pension schemes, or retirement benefits. Their earnings may also vary from month to month, making financial planning difficult.

Another challenge is the long working hours and pressure to maintain high customer ratings on digital platforms. A low rating can reduce future work opportunities and income. In addition, gig workers have limited legal protection and fewer opportunities for career growth and professional development. Addressing these challenges through better policies and worker protection can help create a more secure and sustainable gig economy.

7.2 Future of the Gig Economy

The future of the gig economy looks promising because digital technology and online platforms are expanding rapidly. More businesses are expected to hire freelancers and contract workers to reduce costs and access skilled talent. The gig economy will create new employment opportunities, especially for young people and women. However, governments and companies should work together to provide better labour protection, fair wages, and social security benefits to ensure sustainable growth.

7.3 Policy Recommendations

To improve the gig economy, the government should introduce policies that protect gig workers through health insurance, pension schemes, and minimum wage standards. Digital skill development and financial literacy programmes should also be encouraged so that young people can benefit from gig work. Companies should ensure fair payment systems, transparent platform rules, and opportunities for career development. These measures will help create a more secure and inclusive gig economy.



8. CONCLUSION

The gig economy has become an important source of employment, especially for young people seeking flexible work opportunities. It provides easy access to income, helps individuals develop new skills, and supports career growth through digital platforms. Although gig work offers many advantages, workers also face challenges such as income instability, lack of social security, and limited employment benefits. Therefore, there is a need for effective government policies and responsible platform management to improve the working conditions of gig workers. With proper regulations and support, the gig economy can contribute significantly to youth employment, economic growth, and the development of a more flexible labour market in India.

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