



The Process Of Women Empowerment In Gig Economy

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Abstract: The gig economy is a rapidly evolving sector that is transforming the women labour market in India-it tries to examine the growth of the gig economy in India, its opportunities and challenges and the policy implications for the Indian economy-Using data from various sources like government reports, research studies and industry surveys, the paper analyzes the Scope of gig economy in the process of empowerment of women in India, Issues faced by gig women, Challenges in Providing Social Security to gig Workers, Ensuring social security of gig women workers.

Key words:

Policy implication, gig economy, social security, challenges empowerment.

INTRODUCTION:

The Gig economy refers to the growing trend of short-term, flexible, and independent work arrangements. It has the potential to play a vital role in the empowerment of women in India.General workforce environmentAccording to a Nasscom Aon report, (17 Jun 2024) India's Gig workforce is projected to reach 23.5 million by 2030 from 7 million in 2021. This means gig workers will constitute 4.1% of the total workforce in India by the 2029-30 financial years, compared to 1.5% in the 2021-22 fiscal years.Gig economy can help in the process of empowerment of women in India in many ways.The gig economy is cutting across generations and is no longer restricted to the services sector. Modern problems require modern solutions.

India's Gig and platform economy has been experiencing remarkable growth in recent years, transforming the way people work and earn a living. This article aims to provide a lightaddressing the scope, issues, challenges in providing social security to women and the role of the gig economy in women's empowerment in India. The Gig economy has played a pivotal role in women's empowerment in India. It offers them a chance to enter the workforce without compromising on their domestic responsibilities. Women can work from home, set their own schedules, and pursue their careers on their terms. While the gig economy

offers unprecedented flexibility, it also raises critical concerns about workers' rights, legal protection, and the evolving nature of employment relationships. Landscape of Gig Economy in India: Opportunities, Challenges, and the Quest for Workers' Rights Jothirmay Kapil LinkedIn

This growth is transforming the labour market and altering the models of employees, employers, and employability. The government's policies and investments will be vital in shaping and accelerating this growth. Many countries worldwide are experiencing similar changes, but India has the opportunity to lead the way. The gig economy can provide first-time employment and skill development opportunities, serving as a gateway to future workforce productivity.

From Amazon's Haryana warehouse to the delivery boy at your doorstep- tales of oaths and indignity" which was published in The Indian Express on 17/06/2024. The article highlights the harsh conditions gig workers in India face and underscores the broader socio-economic issues that allow such exploitation, calling for better labor rights and protections. A Budget solution to India's skilled workforce challenge: Unleash the Gig contingent by Kartik Narayan, ET CONTRIBUTORS Last Updated: Jan 21, 2024, 02:45:00 PM IST in The Economic Times.

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Image: Nasscomreport-Future of work

OBJECT:

- One of the primary object times of a separate law for Gig workers in India.
- Need for social security in health insurance, Maternity benefits, Pension Schemes and Need for safe working condition.
- Regulating platform companies.

SCOPE OF GIG ECONOMY IN THE PROCESS OF EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN INDIA:

- Join and drop out of work: Many women in India face barriers to employment due to cultural and societal norms. The gig economy provides women with on-demand work allowing her to join and drop-out of work force as per her own will.
- Compliments work from home and technology: With gig employment complemented by work-from-home and technology, new employment opportunities for women in tier 2 and 3 cities have emerged where they do not need to travel much.
- Traditional family roles and employment: women are able to balance work and family roles due to flexible working hours. For example, the rise of online platforms such as Amazon and Flip kart has created opportunities for women in rural areas to earn money by selling their products online.
- Virtual working: A boost in use of digital technology and increased acceptance of virtual working for sales and distribution jobs opens up opportunities for women to enter fields where interactions are managed through apps and phone calls.
- Safety aspects: It has addressed the issue of safety during travel and night shifts to women workers.
- Confidence due to financial independence: Gig employment helps women earn extra income, boosts her confidence and gives decision making power, all of which are important components of women empowerment.
- Higher pay: The gig economy has helped to provide women with access to higher paying, higher skilled work, such as consulting, design, and marketing, which can be more lucrative than traditional employment opportunities with gender wage gap.
- Quick services: Indian consumers, especially in urban areas, are increasingly demanding convenient and quick services like food delivery, E-commerce, etc which has created a market for Gig workers particularly women to fill roles.
 - Gig economy is not limited to a single sector: The gig workers are engaged in various fields, including education, manufacturing, finance, and insurance.
 - Urbanization: With increasing urbanization, there has been a growing demand for retail services in urban areas. This has led to a need for a flexible and scalable workforce, which the gig economy can readily provide.
 - Gig Economy and Skill Development: The gig economy encourages individuals to acquire new skills and adapt to evolving market demands. Online courses and platforms offering training in various fields have gained popularity.
 - Gig Economy and Entrepreneurship: Many gig workers view their work as a stepping stone to entrepreneurship. Gig platforms provide a space for individuals to build their brands and gain experience as they transition to running their businesses.

- **Diverse Roles:** The retail sector encompasses a wide range of roles, from in-store sales staff to delivery drivers to customer support agents. This diversity of roles allows individuals with different skills and backgrounds to participate in the gig economy within this sector.
- **Low Entry Barriers:** Many gig jobs in retail and sales do not require specialized skills or extensive training, making it accessible to a broader segment of the population.

METHODOLOGY:

- This paper tries to examine the growth of the gig economy in India, its opportunities and challenges and the policy implications for the Indian economy. Using data from various sources like government reports, research studies and industry surveys, the paper analyzes the Scope of gig economy in the process of empowerment of women in India, Issues faced by gig women, Challenges in Providing Social Security to gig Workers, Ensuring social security of gig women workers. To analyze the impact of women workers on the labour market, and the policy challenges and opportunities presented by the sector.

ISSUES FACED BY GIG WOMEN:-

- **Lack of security:** Gig economy works purely on market principle of demand and supply. There is a lack of certainty regarding availability of work and stability of career. The easily replaceable low skill gig laborers are exploited by employers and there is very little regulation.
- **Lack of any benefits:** Flexi-workers usually are not entitled to minimum wages, insurances, PF, retirement plans, paid leave, maternity benefits, etc.
- **Lack of wage parity:** Permanent employees have a grade-pay plus benefits like travel allowance, etc. Gig workers are paid strictly as per the amount of work.
- **Up skilling at own cost:** A worker needs to be skilled enough to be gainfully employed in the gig economy. While companies routinely invest in training employees, a gig-economy woman worker will have to upgrade her skills on her own at her own cost.
- **Restricted growth:** Low skill gig workers cannot move-up the organizational hierarchy and are not considered for promotions.
- **Demand-Supply Mismatch:** In the middle and higher end spectrum of gig jobs, there are already many more potential online independent workers than jobs, and this demand-supply mismatch will only get worse over time, depressing wages especially for women.
- **Frequent Termination:** The instances of blacklisting workers or terminating them from work without hearing out their side have increased.

- **Economic Security:** The sector depends on demand which leads to job insecurity and income uncertainty, highlighting the necessity of providing social security benefits such as unemployment insurance, disability coverage, and retirement savings programs.
- **Health Insurance:** Lack of access to employer-sponsored health insurance and other healthcare benefits leaves gig workers vulnerable to unexpected medical expenses. Prioritizing their health and well-being will create a healthier and more productive workforce.
- **Level Playing Field:** Exemption from traditional employment protections creates disparities where gig workers face exploitative working conditions and inadequate compensation. Providing social security benefits will level the playing field.
- **Long-term Financial Security:** Without employer-sponsored retirement plans, gig workers may struggle to save enough for their future like for post retirement needs.

CHALLENGES IN PROVIDING SOCIAL SECURITY TO GIG WOMEN WORKERS:-

- **Classification and Excess Flexibility:** The Gig economy is characterized by its flexibility, allowing workers to choose when, where, and how much they work. Designing social security benefits that accommodate this flexibility and meet the diverse needs of gig workers is a complex task.
- **Funding and Cost Distribution:** Traditional social security systems depend on employer and employee contributions, with employers typically bearing a significant portion of the costs. In the gig economy, where workers are often self-employed, identifying appropriate funding mechanisms becomes complex.
- **Coordination and Data Sharing:** Efficient data sharing and coordination among gig platforms, government agencies, and financial institutions are necessary to accurately assess gig workers' earnings, contributions, and eligibility for various social security programs. However, as gig workers often work for multiple platforms or clients, it becomes challenging to coordinate and ensure proper coverage.
- **Education and Awareness:** Many gig workers may not fully understand their rights and entitlements regarding social security benefits.
- **Raising awareness and providing education** about the importance of social security, eligibility criteria, and the application process is a challenging task.

ENSURING SOCIAL SECURITY OF GIG WOMEN WORKERS:-

- Implementing Code on Social Security, 2020: Although the Code on Social Security, 2020, contains provisions for gig workers, the rules are yet to be framed by the States and not much has moved in terms of instituting the Board. These should thus be taken up expeditiously by the government.
- Expanding Employer Responsibilities: Strong support for gig workers should come from the gig companies that they benefit from this agile and low-cost work arrangement. The practice of classifying gig workers as self-employed or independent contractors needs to be eliminated. Companies must be provided equal benefits as that of a regular employee.
- Education and Training: The government should invest in education and training programs for gig workers to improve their skills and increase their earning potential.
- Government Support: Collaboration between governments, gig platforms, and labour organizations to establish fair and transparent mechanisms for sharing the responsibility of providing social security benefits. E.g. Schemes similar to Ayushman Bharat should be extended to cover gig workers with cost sharing with the employer.
- Adopting International Examples: The UK has instituted a model by categorizing gig workers as “workers,” which is a category between employees and the self-employed. This secures them a minimum wage, paid holidays, retirement benefit plans, and health insurance. Similarly, in Indonesia, they are entitled to accident, health, and death insurance.
- Linking Women Empowerment with Gig Economy: There is a need to build the right physical and social infrastructure that supports the engagement of women in the gig workforce.

1. India's Gig Workers Remain Undocumented, Unprotected

There are only estimates of India's gig workforce, and this lack of data is one of the reasons why gig workers are largely bereft of social security in a little-regulated gig sector, say experts. **By Aman Singh, Udisha Srivastav | 21 June, 2024**

While the gig economy offers unprecedented flexibility, it also raises critical concerns about workers' rights, legal protection, and the evolving nature of employment relationships.

2. Read more at:

- In this Article on Gig worker in India by NITI.GOV.SITES. Describe of the Social security of Gig workers.
- NITI Aayog's report on 27th June 2022 Released a report on India's Booming Gig and platform Economy, Which in turn cites the current report By International forums on India S Gig Economy. The Economic Survey 2020-21 has Noted that India has all needy Emerged as one of the world's largest

countries for Felix-staffing (Gig and Platform work) the IL O's 2021 world Employment and Social outlook report states that the number of digital labor platforms has grown fivefold over the last decade.

- **If was Estimated that:**

7.7 million workers were Engaged in the Gig Economy, (2020-21) they constituted to around 1.5% of the total workforce in India, and it Expected to rise up to 23.5 million workers by 2029-30, 4.1% of total livelihood in India by then. Chapter 6 of the report specifically deals in Great detail, with the social security policies that can be adapted to the Gig workers and presents Global Examples where countries such as the US, UK, Singapore, South Africa, Hong Kong have a newly made laws to confer such Benefits.

- In this Article **onlawvhoomi.com** describe the (A comparative study of Gig workers) Unaddressed problems of Gig workers.

Digital labor platforms are newly developed and still developing. Developing countries like India's the Indian market are new to this trend. So, the Indian courts don't chair any Exposure to Issues arising out of this and there was no specific legislation in respect to these Gig workers were panes.

And these Gig workers are also not considered under the existing labor laws as the legislation and Judiciary System are still in the confusion to place them under existing laws due to the nature of work done by the Gig workers. These Gig works are not considered as employer under Indian law.

The existing labor laws in India consider only the employers under the government sector, private sector and public sector undertaking and others defined under the act. As a result, the Gig workers are not entitled to any of the benefits such as minimum wages, maternity leave, paid holidays, compensation for termination, stipulated working hours and forming of trade union as such.

- In this article Rajasthan state government implement to the Gig worker welfare act and funds: (In India First Time)

In a First, the Rajasthan Government on Feb 10 said that the state will launch Rs.200 crone fund to protect Gig workers chief minister Ashok Gehlot announced the enactment of the Gig workers welfare act, the establishment of a Board's a welfare fund of Rs.200 crone in his government's budget for 2023-24. Gehlot said Gig workers work with companies like ola, uber, Swiggy, Zomato, Amazon and others and their numbers are Increasing, to protect them from harassment and something else.

- In European parliament 2019, social protection of Gig Economy worker in the European union.

Social protection of Gig Economy workers in the European Union. This report by the European parliament provides an overview of the social protection of Gig workers in the EU, Including the challenges and opportunities associated with providing social protection in the Gig Economy.

- In International social security association (2018). Social security and the Gig Economy.

Social security and the Gig Economy, this article by the International social security association discusses the challenges of providing social security for Gig workers and proposes potential solutions, such as the creation of a universal basic Income or a portable benefits system.

- In Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2019) social protection of the self Employed and Gig Economy workers.

Social protection of the self employed and Gig Economy workers. This report by the organisation for economic-co-operation and development (DECD) provides an overview of the social protection of self-employed workers and Gig Economy workers including the challenges of providing social protection in a rapidly changing labor market.

- Journal of European social policy 2020 comparative Analysis of policy responses in US and EU.

A comparative Analysis of policy responses in the US and EU. This article by the journal of European social policy provides a comparative analysis of social security polities for Gig workers in the US and EU, including the challenges and opportunities Associated with different policy approaches.

- National Law University Delhi (2020) Gig workers and the law: A review of existing Frameworks in India.

A review of existing frameworks in India. This report by the national law university Delhi provides an overview of the legal framework governing Gig workers in India including the social security challenges Faced by these workers.

- International labor organization (2018). The social protection of Gig workers in India.

This report by the international labor organization provides an overview of the social protection challenges faced by Gig workers in India and proposes various policy options to address these challenges.

- Center for sustainable employment, Azim Premji university (2020) current scenario.

This report by the centre for sustainable employment at Azim Premji university provides an overview of the social security challenges faced by Gig workers in India and argues for the Need for a separate law to address these challenges.

CONCLUSION:

India's Social Security Code, enacted in 2020, aimed to consolidate nine laws related to social security, including provisions for unorganized sector workers. While it marked a significant step in recognizing the rights of gig workers and platform workers, recent observations and critiques point to a myriad of challenges and concerns within the legislation. Currently, the Code is not in effect as the State Governments of each state in India are in the process of finalizing the rules for the purposes of the Code.

Recently, the Labour Minister of India indicated that the rules have been prepared by most states and the law will be implemented at an appropriate time. However, even implemented the code inherently has many pressing concerns with respect to recognition of gig workers. In the short term, the gig economy can be a step towards increasing female labor force participation and women empowerment. But, in long run, predictable and formal employment with opportunities of up skilling is required. Some labor laws and regulations along with documentation of best practices across the globe on how different industries are using new technologies and at the same time creating job opportunities for women would help create supportive policies.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM:

1. Lack of access to social security benefits.
2. Low and irregular income.
3. Limited bargaining power.
4. Unclear Legal status.
5. No separate laws in India for Gig workers.
6. Lack of health Insurance, Retirement Benefits.
7. Unpredictable work hours.
8. No Job security

FINDINGS AND SOLUTION:

Finally, there is a need for more research on policy interventions and regulatory frameworks that can effectively address their challenges faced by Gig workers in India. This includes examining the feasibility and impact of various models of social protection and benefits as well as the potential for collective bargaining and other forms of worker organization in the Gig Economy. As my view, In India, No separate law for Gig workers.

Research Gap:

The Research Gap in the study of Gig workers in India is the lack of comprehensive data on the demographics, working conditions, and experiences of Gig workers across various sectors. While there have been some studies on specific segments of the Gig Economy, such as ride hailing or food delivery, there is a need for more systematic and cross sectoral research that covers a wider range of Gig work.

Furthermore, there is limited research on the social and economic implications of Gig work for both Gig workers and society as a whole. This Includes issues such as income volatility, job security, access to social protections and benefits and the impact of Gig work on traditional employment and labor markets.

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