

Unveiling The Challenges of the Gig Economy in Tamil Nadu: An Empirical Study

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Article History

Received: Mar-2024
Revised: Apr-2024
Accepted: May-2024
Published: July-2024

Keywords

Gig Worker
Policy Decision
Code on Social Security 2020
Tamil Nadu
Welfare

Abstract

The gig economy has arisen as a notable labour market phenomenon, propelled by technology progress and shifting work models. The objective of this research is to investigate the complex and diverse difficulties encountered by gig workers in Tamil Nadu, India. This study used a mixed-methods approach, including quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, to collect complete data from a varied sample of gig workers in different industries. The main results reveal that gig workers in Tamil Nadu have significant challenges regarding job security and income stability, which are typically worsened by the lack of formal contracts and dependence on unpredictable demand. The research demonstrates that working circumstances are often unstable, characterized by extended work hours, inadequate safety protocols, and limited intervals for rest, resulting in detrimental effects on both physical and mental well-being. Moreover, the absence of access to crucial benefits such as healthcare coverage, compensated time off, and pension schemes greatly affects their financial stability. The study emphasizes the digital gap as a significant obstacle that hampers the productivity and income of gig workers. This split is caused by discrepancies in internet availability and proficiency in using digital technologies. Implementing these principles is crucial for promoting a gig economy in Tamil Nadu that is both sustainable and fair. This study adds to the expanding collection of literature on gig employment and offers significant information for policymakers, stakeholders, and scholars who are interested in understanding the dynamics of the gig economy in emerging nations.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The gig economy in India has seen exponential growth, driven by technological advancements, demographic shifts, and changing work preferences. The gig economy refers to the increasing phenomenon of individuals engaging in independent employment, often on a temporary basis, for various customers. Online platforms often streamline this kind of job by linking workers with customers. The expansion is being driven by many reasons, which includes, the proliferation of technology, growing need for adaptable work arrangements, and the rising population of young individuals who are more inclined towards participating in the gig economy. The gig economy in India has both favourable and unfavourable consequences. One advantage is that it might provide individuals more freedom and autonomy in their professional endeavours. Additionally, it has the potential to provide employment opportunities and enhance economic growth. However, the gig economy may have detrimental effects on workers, such as decreased salaries, reduced benefits, and

diminished job security. Additionally, it might provide challenges for workers to get social security and other governmental benefits. The Indian government is now endeavouring to determine the most effective approach to regulate the gig economy. In 2020 the New Labour Codes implemented mandating the compulsory registration of all gig workers with the government. The legislation also establishes a baseline pay and working standards for those engaged in gig employment. The long-term ramifications of the gig economy on India are yet uncertain at this early stage. Nevertheless, it is certain that the gig economy is a permanent fixture and will have a substantial influence on the Indian economy. The rise of digital platforms such as Uber, Ola, Swiggy, Zomato, and Urban Company has significantly contributed to the growth of the gig economy. These platforms connect gig workers with customers efficiently, facilitating a wide range of services from ride-hailing to home repairs.

Indian labour law classifies workers into three main categories: employees, contractual workers (including contract labour and inter-state migrant workers), and those working in the unorganized labour sector. Employees get a range of perks, such as a guaranteed minimum income, bonuses, a provident fund, gratuity, and maternity benefits¹. The Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970, and the Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of And Conditions of Service) Act, 1979, have distinct rules for contract labour and migrant workers, respectively. The Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act, 2008 provides coverage for workers in the unorganized sector, such as home-based workers, self-employed workers, and wage workers². With the increasing popularity of the gig economy in India, it is important to carefully evaluate the well-being and rights of gig workers. The urgent issue at hand is finding a way to reconcile the ever-changing nature of gig labour with the need of providing social security, health benefits, and fair compensation.

2. CURRENT LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR GIG WORKERS IN INDIA AND THEIR EFFECT IN THE SOCIETY

The Social Security Code of India, passed in 2020, had the objective of consolidating nine legislations pertaining to social security, which included measures for workers in the unorganized sector. Although the Act was a notable milestone in acknowledging the rights of gig workers and platform workers, subsequent observations and criticisms have highlighted several issues and concerns associated with it. Presently, the Code remains inactive since the State Governments of each state in India are in the midst of concluding the regulations for the implementation of the Code. Recently, the Indian Labour Minister said that the majority of states have formulated the guidelines and the legislation would be enforced at a suitable moment. Nevertheless, even when the law is put into action, it still has several significant issues regarding the acknowledgment of gig workers. Conceptual ambiguity and intersections of definitions: An obstacle that has been recognized in the Social Security Code is the perplexity arising from the overlapping categories of gig workers, platform workers, and unorganized sector workers. The ambiguity generates inquiries on the exact suitability of social security programs for each group, which might possibly result in difficulties during implementation³. Although there was an intention to include gig workers and platform workers in the social security system, a significant portion of gig workers still face the challenge of not having social

insurance. The Code introduces these categories for the first time, but does not provide a clear plan for their inclusive social security coverage, resulting in a discrepancy between intention and implementation. Gig workers, who make up a substantial part of the changing labour force, persistently encounter difficulties such as uncertain employment, lack of legal assistance in conflicts with employers, and limitations on establishing recognized labour unions. The mere 0.15% of workers questioned who have access to "accidental insurance" highlights the disparity between the goals set by the Code and the actual situation experienced by gig workers. Aside from worries over social security, the legal status of gig workers is also a source of anxiety. They have a deficiency of legal assistance when dealing with conflicts involving management, encounter obstacles when attempting to establish officially recognized trade unions, and are not acknowledged as regular employees according to the current labour regulations (Industrial Disputes Act 1947). This situation places gig workers in a precarious position, without sufficient legal protections⁴.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) has also recommended disregarding formal agreements when classifying gig workers. The current Industrial Disputes Act, while it addresses conflicts between employers and employees, specifically does not include independent contractors. This exclusion results in a substantial segment of the gig economy workers without legal safeguards, which gives rise to issues over the justness and equality in the treatment of all workers in the changing work environment⁵.

3. INITIATIVE TAKEN BY THE PLATFORMS FOR GIG WORKERS

Prominent platforms are making efforts to tackle the increasing worries related to extended work hours and difficult working conditions experienced by gig workers. Initiatives undertaken by prominent companies such as Zomato, Swiggy, DriveU, and Urban Company are serving as prominent examples of transformation, demonstrating a strong dedication to the welfare and empowerment of their gig workers⁶.

Zomato, a key participant in the food delivery business, has implemented an innovative approach to address worker weariness - shelter rest spots. These dedicated places provide delivery people a defined space to rest and unwind between deliveries, recognizing the physical strain that the job may impose⁷. This action not only emphasizes Zomato's dedication to the welfare of its workers but also establishes a standard for the industry to give importance to the health and well-being of its gig

¹ *The changing Nature of Work, A World Bank Group Flagship Report, World Development Report 2019.* Retrieved from <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/816281518818814423/pdf/Main-Report.pdf>.

² Dr. Vikas Kumar Jaiswa, et. al. *International Journal of Engineering Research and Applications*, Vol. 13, Issue 7, July 2023, pp 263-271

³ https://labour.gov.in/sites/default/files/ss_code_gazette.pdf

⁴ *Industrial Disputes Act, 1947*, Retrieved from https://www.indiacode.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/17112/1/the_ industrial_disputes_act.pdf.

⁵ *International Labour Organization. (2018). "India Employment Trends 2018: India's Employment and Labour Market Integration into Global Production Networks."*

⁶ *Review of Literature on the Topic of the Gig Economy in India, International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology, Volume 8, Issue 4, April- 2023.*

⁷ Ria Kasliwal, "Gender and the Gig Economy: A Qualitative Study of Gig Platforms for Women Workers," ORF Issue Brief No. 359, May 2020, Observer Research Foundation.

labour. Swiggy, a prominent participant in the food delivery industry, has introduced skilling programs aimed at empowering gig workers by improving their professional abilities. Not only does this provide new opportunities for personal and professional development, but it also enhances the quality of service provided on the platform. Swiggy's focus on skill development is a calculated decision that acknowledges the possibilities of a proficient and driven gig workforce⁸.

DriveU, a firm that offers driving services on demand, is increasing its dedication to driver safety by implementing insurance coverage for its drivers. This action recognizes the inherent hazards linked to gig employment and establishes a safety provision for drivers in the event of accidents or crises while they are on duty. Urban Company, a platform that provides various home services, is implementing a distinctive strategy by providing an Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) for its partners. This effort aims to synchronize the interests of gig workers with the prosperity of the platform, providing them with a feeling of possession and a possible financial share in the company's development⁹.

Although these efforts represent notable advancements, industry experts concur that more measures are necessary to tackle the complex difficulties encountered by gig workers. The gig economy is now at a critical point, and it is imperative for all parties involved to cooperate in order to guarantee equitable remuneration, clear guidelines, and the provision of necessary perks for gig workers. The manifestation of these activities by prominent figures in the business is a promising indication that the gig economy is progressing to cater to the requirements of its workers. Nevertheless, moving forward necessitates persistent endeavours and an ongoing conversation among gig platforms, workers, and pertinent stakeholders to establish a gig economy that is more sustainable and fairer in the long run. The gig economy, despite its flexible nature, poses substantial difficulties in maintaining worker rights. Gig workers do not get customary job benefits like as health insurance and paid time off, which leaves them financially susceptible during periods of sickness or economic downturns. Deprived of conventional labour safeguards, these individuals encounter employment uncertainty as a result of variations in demand. The lack of social security exacerbates their susceptibility, leaving them devoid of a safety net during times of need. The process of employment becoming a commodity and the presence of competition among gig workers might lead to a decrease in earnings.

4. GLOBAL LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVE ON GIG WORKERS

4.1 United States of America

⁸Technology Reshaping the Future of Work India Perspective, Retrieved from <https://www.nasscom.in/knowledge-center/publications/technology-reshaping-future-work-india-perspective>

⁹ India's Booming Gig and Platform Economy, Perspectives and Recommendation on the Future of Work. Policy Brief by NITI Aayog, June 2022. Retrieved from https://www.niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2022-06/Policy_Brief_India%27s_Booming_Gig_and_Platform_Economy_27062022.pdf

In the United States of America (USA) Uber and Deliveroo, which have expanded into worldwide enterprises, have encountered legal disputes about the misclassification of the bulk of its personnel as independent contractors or self-employed individuals. An important potential issue arises from the fact that gig workers lack familiarity with the legal criteria for determining employment status. In the 2018 *Dynamex Operations West, Inc. v. Superior Court* case¹⁰, the Supreme Court of California established the control test to redefine the relationship between employers and employees. This ruling requires companies like Uber and Lyft to classify and treat their workers as employees rather than independent contractors.

4.2 Australia

Australian gig workers will also be granted the freedom to engage in negotiations on their minimum salary and working conditions. If approved, the "Closing Loopholes Bill" will be enacted on July 1, 2024. The legislation would provide a clear definition for those who work in the gig economy and perform tasks such as food delivery or driving for platforms like Uber or DoorDash¹¹. The forthcoming legislation, to be presented in parliament by the center-left Labour administration, would provide Australian gig workers the ability to engage in discussions to establish minimum remuneration and working conditions.

4.3 United Kingdom

The Supreme Court of the United Kingdom has unanimously supported the Employment Tribunal's conclusion that the drivers involved in the well-known case of *Uber v Aslam*¹² should be categorized as 'workers' rather than self-employed. This result marks the last appeal decision in the case. The ruling was rendered based on the particular circumstances of the case, and hence, it is applicable just to the drivers who filed the lawsuit against Uber. It is not necessarily implied that other Uber drivers would similarly be categorized as 'workers'. However, the ruling establishes a significant legal decision and is expected to stimulate other lawsuits against Uber. Uber has officially announced that they would provide a guaranteed minimum salary, holiday pay, and pension contributions to all of its drivers in the United Kingdom¹³.

4.4 Netherlands

In Netherlands Deliveroo's employment policies in the Netherlands, including its use of freelancing contracts with riders, encountered criticism and legal disputes with labour unions. The disagreement between FNV(a Dutch labour union) and Deliveroo led to legal procedures, during which the subdistrict court and

¹⁰ 4 Cal.5th 903

¹¹ Fair Work Legislation Amendment (Closing Loopholes) Bill 2023, Retrieved from https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Bills_Legislation/bd/bd2324a/24bd17.

¹² [2021] UKSC 5

¹³ *Jeremias Adams-Prassl, Uber BV v Aslam: '[W]ork relations ... cannot safely be left to contractual regulation', Industrial Law Journal, Volume 51, Issue 4, December 2022, Pages 955–966, <https://doi.org/10.1093/indlaw/dwac027>*

court of appeal determined that Deliveroo's contracts should be classified as employment contracts, in accordance with Dutch labour legislation. The Supreme Court has affirmed this ruling, signifying a departure from the prior custom of hiring riders as independent contractors¹⁴.

4.5 India

In India, the case of *Dhrangadhara Chemical Works v. State of Saurashtra*¹⁵ established that the main criterion for determining an employer-employee relationship is the supervision and control test. In the case of *Balwant Rai Saluja v. Air India Ltd*¹⁶, the Supreme Court of India established the integrated testing technique to determine the connection between an employer and an employee. This approach considers several factors that influence the status of an employee. These factors include the appointing authority, the paymaster, the ability to dismiss, the duration of alternative service, the level of control and supervision, the nature of the job (whether it is skilled or professional), the nature of the establishment, and the right to reject. Additionally, the employer's right to select or dismiss workers, set remuneration, deduct insurance contributions, and other aspects related to the employment relationship also play a role in determining employee status. In September 2021, the Karnataka High Court determined that delivery partners working for e-commerce platforms like Amazon and Flipkart should be classified as workers according to the Industrial Disputes Act. The court determined that the e-commerce platforms exercised control and supervision over the delivery partners, and as a result, the delivery partners were eligible for the legal protections granted by labour legislation.

The Indian Federation of App-based Transport Workers (IFAT) encountered obstacles in their efforts to get social security benefits for gig workers, as shown by a Public Interest Litigation (PIL). Companies modified the wording of contracts to avoid legal consequences, highlighting the need for strong laws. The regulatory scrutiny has been triggered by concerns about unfair commercial practices and data privacy, emphasizing the need for comprehensive legal frameworks¹⁷. The Government of Rajasthan has enacted the Rajasthan Platform Based Gig Workers (Registration and Welfare) Act, 2023 on July 24, 2023. This pioneering law is the first of its kind in India and governs the involvement of gig workers, namely those employed on online aggregator platforms. The legislation is applicable to both 'aggregators' and 'principal employers' and includes gig workers who are under contract, including those engaged in piece-rate employment. The objective is to provide social security and other perks to gig workers that operate on platform-based systems. The labour reforms implemented in Rajasthan have served as a source of inspiration for other states, such as Karnataka, which is now contemplating similar measures. One potential change being considered is the introduction of a cess on transactions involving

platform-based gig workers, with the aim of using the funds generated to provide them with benefits. The Code on Social Security, 2022 acknowledges gig and platform workers at the national level, although it has not been implemented yet¹⁸.

5. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- Narayan & Selvaraj, (2020) the authors stated that many gig workers come from lower socio-economic backgrounds and see gig work as a means to earn a livelihood amidst limited employment opportunities
- Singh & Shukla (2021) the authors considered the fact that access to reliable digital infrastructure is crucial for gig work. In Tamil Nadu, disparities in internet access and digital literacy can affect the efficiency and earnings of gig workers
- Kumar & Suresh (2021) the authors discussed the pandemic has had a profound impact on gig workers in Tamil Nadu, with many facing reduced job opportunities and heightened health risks. This period has highlighted the vulnerabilities of gig work.

6. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of the is to investigate and understand the various challenges faced by gig workers in Tamil Nadu. This includes exploring issues related to job security, income stability, working conditions, access to benefits, and the overall impact of gig work on their livelihoods. The study aims to provide empirical data to highlight these challenges and offer insights that could inform policy recommendations and strategies to improve the working conditions and economic stability of gig workers in the region.

7. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are the primary challenges faced by gig workers in Tamil Nadu regarding job security and income stability?
- How do working conditions in the gig economy impact the physical and mental well-being of gig workers in Tamil Nadu?
- What are the common benefits or lack thereof available to gig workers in Tamil Nadu, and how do they compare to those in traditional employment?
- What are the socio-economic backgrounds of gig workers in Tamil Nadu, and how do these backgrounds influence their participation in the gig economy?
- What policy measures or interventions do gig workers in Tamil Nadu believe could improve their working conditions and overall livelihood?
- How does the digital infrastructure in Tamil Nadu support or hinder gig workers in their daily tasks and long-term sustainability in the gig economy?

¹⁴ Zekic, N. 2019. "Contradictory Court Rulings on the Status of Deliveroo Workers in the Netherlands." *Comparative Labor Law & Policy Journal*, 5 (dispatch no. 17)

¹⁵ AIR1973SC1041

¹⁶ AIRONLINE 2013 SC 652

¹⁷ Indian Federation of App-Based Transport Workers (IFAT) vs. Union of India and Others, 2022.

ISSN 3048-5045; Vol 01 Issue 03; July-2024; Pg: 1-6

¹⁸ [https://industrialrelationsnews.ioe-emp.org/industrial-relations-and-labour-law-november-2023/news/article/rajasthan-introduced-platform-based-gig-workers-registration-and-welfare-act#:~:text=the%20European%20Union-,Rajasthan%20introduced%20Platform%20Based%20Gig%20Workers%20\(Registration%20and%20Welfare\)%20Act,workers%20at%20the%20legislative%20level.](https://industrialrelationsnews.ioe-emp.org/industrial-relations-and-labour-law-november-2023/news/article/rajasthan-introduced-platform-based-gig-workers-registration-and-welfare-act#:~:text=the%20European%20Union-,Rajasthan%20introduced%20Platform%20Based%20Gig%20Workers%20(Registration%20and%20Welfare)%20Act,workers%20at%20the%20legislative%20level.)

- What role do intermediaries (such as platforms and agencies) play in shaping the experiences and challenges of gig workers in Tamil Nadu?

8. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This survey analysis focuses on the experiences and challenges faced by 50 gig workers in Tamil Nadu. The gig workers surveyed come from various sectors, including ride-hailing, food delivery, home services, and freelance work. The analysis aims to provide insights into the common issues they encounter and suggest potential improvements. The sample is collected randomly throughout the state of Tamil Nadu. The Researcher uses the simple random sampling in collecting the data as primary source. The secondary data is collected by review of literature from journal articles in Hein online and Jstor, websites and such other sources. The researcher conducted questionnaire analysis to collect the data from the Gig workers. The details of the data collected is mentioned in Table 1 showing the Category of work, employees and in Table 2 showing Age distribution of Gig workers. Figure 1 showing the Gender percentage of gig workers. Table 3 showing the number of workers facing issues in the Gig Work.

Table 1: Category of work and employees

Gig Work	Percentage of Gig workers
Ride-Hailing (Uber, Ola)	30%
Food Delivery (Swiggy, Zomato)	25%
Home Services (Urban Company)	20%
Freelance (Graphic Design, Writing, etc.)	15%

Table 2: Age distribution of Gig workers

Age distribution	Percentage of Gig Workers
18-25 years	40%
26-35 years	35%
36-45 years	15%
46 years and above	10%

Percentage of Gig Workers

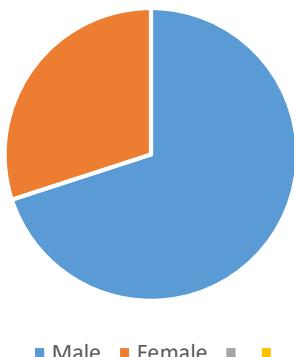


Fig 1: Showing the Gender percentage of gig workers

Table 3: The number of workers facing issues in the Gig Work

Issues faced by Gig workers	Categorising of issues	Percentage of workers facing the issues
Income Stability	Regular Income	20%
	Irregular Income	80%
Job Security	Secure	10%
	Insecure	90%
Awareness of Legal Rights	Aware	15%
	Unaware	85%
Access to Benefits	Health Insurance	10%
	Retirement Benefits	5%
	Paid Leave	2%
On-time Payments	Always	25%
	Sometimes	50%
	Rarely	25%
Payment Disputes	Resolved	30%
	Quickly	
	Delayed Resolution	50%
Access to Training	Unresolved	20%
	Regular Access	10%
	Occasional Access	25%
Desire for Upskilling	No Access	65%
	High	70%
	Moderate	20%
	Low	10%
Work-Life Balance	Satisfied	30%
	Neutral	40%
	Dissatisfied	30%
Social Perception and Stigma	Positive Perception	20%
	Neutral Perception	50%
	Negative Perception	30%

9. RESEARCH ANALYSIS

- The majority of gig workers experience income instability and job insecurity, reflecting the project-based nature of gig work. Many workers reported that their earnings vary significantly from month to month, making financial planning difficult.
- There is a significant lack of awareness about legal rights among gig workers. Most do not have access to essential benefits like health insurance, retirement plans, or paid leave, highlighting a critical gap in social security provisions.
- Payment issues are prevalent, with only a quarter of workers consistently receiving timely payments. Half of

the respondents faced delays in resolving payment disputes, which affects their financial stability.

- Most gig workers have limited access to training and upskilling opportunities, despite a strong desire for such programs. This lack of training can hinder their career growth and ability to take on higher-paying jobs.
- Opinions on work-life balance are mixed. While some workers appreciate the flexibility, others find the irregular hours and lack of stability challenging.
- A notable portion of gig workers feel that their work is undervalued and carries social stigma. This affects their overall job satisfaction and social standing.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The complexity and diverse aspects of the gig economy in India have led to an increasing acknowledgment of the need for multi-stakeholder solutions in order to tackle the issues that gig workers encounter. This might include cooperation among governments, corporations, non-governmental organizations, and labour advocates to formulate laws and initiatives that protect the rights and well-being of gig workers and foster just and impartial working conditions. Additionally, it may include actively interacting with gig workers to get a deeper comprehension of their requirements and apprehensions, and to devise customized solutions that cater to their distinct situations and encounters. Gig workers in India, without official legal safeguards, have resorted to informal social safety nets to aid with themselves and their families. Examples of such initiatives include community-based insurance systems, informal savings and lending clubs, and peer-to-peer support networks. Although safety nets may aid in some situations, they should not be relied upon as a replacement for official legal safeguards and may prove to be unreliable or inadequate during significant health or economic emergencies. Due to the dynamic nature of employment in the gig economy, several gig workers in India are actively pursuing skills improvement and ongoing education to maintain their competitiveness and marketability in their respective industries. One might engage in activities such as enrolling in online courses, participating in seminars or training sessions, or actively pursuing mentoring and networking opportunities to remain updated on the latest advances and developing trends. Due to these issues, several gig workers in India have resorted to collective action and advocacy initiatives in order to get improved working conditions and legal safeguards. Examples of such actions include affiliating with labour unions or worker groups, actively participating in rallies and strikes, and using social media platforms

12. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Conflict of interest declared none.

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to promote awareness of their problems and concerns. Although these endeavours may provide positive results in some instances, they may also pose risks or prove challenging to maintain in the long run, especially when confronted with resistance from influential technology platforms or governmental bodies. Thus, it is need of the time that the New Labour Codes 2020 should be implemented with more clarity and recommendations for the benefits of the Gig workers.

11. CONCLUSION

The development of India's gig economy, characterized by the emergence of platform and non-platform workers, mirrors a wider worldwide phenomenon of redefining the essence of employment. The gig economy provides workers with freedom and opportunity, but it also presents issues with labour rights and social security. To effectively navigate this complex environment, it is crucial to enact well-considered laws that guarantee that all workers in the gig economy may enjoy its advantages. This should be done by promoting a harmonious coexistence between flexibility and comprehensive worker safeguards. India's gig economy requires a collective effort from regulators, businesses, and workers to establish a work environment that is fair and inclusive. India's future path must align with the worldwide advancements in labour legislation. The worldwide gig economy has become a permanent fixture, and as more people participate in it, it is crucial to expand regulatory safeguards. As the gig economy persists in altering conventional employment patterns, the legal frameworks must adjust accordingly. The movement to classify gig workers as employees is gaining traction, whether it is in California, the UK, US, India, or other countries. Implementing a standardized worldwide framework will guarantee the protection of gig workers' rights, creating a strong and adaptable working environment that aligns with the changing dynamics of labour in the 21st century.

In India, the expansion of the gig economy brings out both advantageous prospects and obstacles for the Indian economy as a whole. Although the gig economy has substantial concerns such as worker abuse and instability, it also presents considerable opportunities for innovation, employment growth, and entrepreneurial endeavours. In order to fully exploit this potential, authorities should focus on formulating regulations and making investments that promote the gig economy and foster its expansion. Simultaneously, they must guarantee equitable treatment of gig workers and provide them with necessary safeguards and benefits to ensure their well-being and success.

13. FUNDING

This article did not get any explicit financial support from any public, private or non-profit funding sectors.