

# A Sociological Study on Work Culture and Livelihood Pattern of Gig Workers of Gig Economic Sectors in Chennai City, Tamil Nadu, India

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## ABSTRACT

A gig economy is a free market system in which temporary positions are common and organizations contract with independent workers for short-term engagements. This is the collection of markets that match providers to consumers on a gig or job basis in support on on-demand commerce. In the basic model, gig workers enter into formal agreements with on-demand companies to provide services to the company's clients. The study has made an attempt to assess the Socio-economic standards, demographic profile, the Problems and challenges related to the work culture and the Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats of the Gig workers in selected areas of Chennai city. The study is descriptive in nature and it focused on the issues of gig workers through both primary and secondary data sources. The samples comprising 100 were chosen by using purposive sampling technique and the descriptive analysis was employed to analyse the data with necessary graphical representation. The study has identified the themes such as educational background, safety concern, work load, gender role, work culture, health of the workers of gig economic sector in Chennai city. A comprehensive Sociological approach was launched in this present study with appropriate methods and tools. The study concludes with theoretical application major findings and suggestions as per the objectives used.

**Key words:** Gig economy, Livelihood, workers, work culture, Work life balance, Commerce.

## INTRODUCTION

A digital platform economy popularly referred as the 'Gig Economy'. The sector is one of the most notable developments in the 21<sup>st</sup> century job market. "Gig" is a slang word for a job that lasts a specified period of time; it is typically used by musicians. A gig economy is a free market system in which temporary positions are common and organizations contract with independent workers for short-term engagements. So, instead of a regular wage, workers get paid for "gigs". The gig economy was sometimes called the freelance economy, agile workforce, or even temporary work. Gig workers work as short-term, temporary, or independent contractors for one or a variety of employers (Wood et al., 2019). This is the collection of markets that match providers to consumers on a gig or job basis in support on on-demand commerce. In the basic model, gig workers enter into formal agreements with on-demand companies to provide services to the company's clients. The gig workers engaged by the on-demand company provide the requested service and are compensated for the jobs" (Donovan, et al.2016). A study by the American staffing association found that the majority of Americans (78%) see the gig economy as a new way to describe the participation of this longstanding independent workforce. A 2016 McKinsey report found that up to 162 million people in Europe and the US 20-30% of the working age population engage in some form of independent work, whether out of choice or necessity. It is often referred to as the open talent economy.

The gig and platform economy is a relatively new and emerging sector with immense potential for growth and employment generation (Charlton Emma, 2024). The Economic Survey 2020-21 has noted that India has already emerged as one of the world's largest countries for flexi-staffing and that this form of work will likely continue to grow with the increase in e-commerce platforms. Thus, the gig economy is characterized by short-term contracts or freelance work instead of traditional 'permanent' jobs. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), as of May 2017, there were 10.6 million independent contractors (or 6.9% of all U.S. workers). Gig

workers are generally not easy to identify in surveys about employment and earnings, but reportedly, less than half of those workers rely on gig work as their primary source of income.

A 2019 study by MasterCard estimated that the global gig economy generates \$204 billion in gross volume and is expected to grow by 17% by 2023. In the United States, it has been predicted that by 2027, the country may have more “giggers” than non – gig workers. According to a 2020 report from Intuit, 25 – 30 percent of the US workforce is contingent, and more than 80 percent of large corporations plan to substantially increase their use of a flexible workforce in the coming years. Intuit predicts that small businesses will develop their own collaborative networks of contingent workers, minimizing fixed labor costs and expanding the available talent pool. According to the MasterCard study, while 58% of the gig economy worldwide is in the area of transportation, other industries are starting to see a rise in gig workers as well, including accounting and finance, legal, IT and other professional advisory services (Graham et al., 2017).

## Indian Perspective

The Digital Revolution in India caused by explosive internet penetration has made smartphones and cheap data affordable to millions (Radhakrishnan A.2020). Thus, digitization, internet penetration, a technologically skilled workforce, advancements in information technology, alongside a booming startup culture, propel India’s gig economy. Over the last few years, we have seen the exponential growth at which online service-providing apps such as Uber, Ola, Swiggy, or Zomato have taken over different sectors of the Indian market. These companies make up the largest employers of India’s gig economy, and hence India has now become one of the largest hubs worldwide for the gig economy (Radhakrishnan A. 2020).

India’s gig economy, which has gained momentum in the past few years with the growth of startups and internet companies such as Zomato, Swiggy, Ola, Uber, urban company, Flipkart, Amazon, Dunzo, others, is likely to serve up to 90 million jobs in India’s non-farm sector in the long term. The transaction value of the volume of work performed by gig workers could be worth more than \$250 billion while the overall gig economy could contribute an incremental 1.25 percent approximately to India’s GDP, according to a report by Boston Consulting Group and Michael & Susan Dell Foundation. Gig work is broadly referred to on-demand jobs with little to no formal contracting. Globally, over 200 million are considered involved in the gig economy. The gig-platform economy is at the core of this unfolding paradigm shift. ILO’s 2021 World Employment and Social Outlook Report states that the number of digital labour platforms have grown fivefold over the last decade. Digital platforms offer innovative solutions in different sectors such as transport, retail, personal and home care. They provide promising income opportunities to workers with different skill sets and wider market access to businesses. The gig economy has demonstrated resilience even during the pandemic, with platform workers playing an indispensable role in urban India. The country India is emerging as the third largest online labor market. Online Labour Index survey 2016 shows that India-based employers represented 5.9% of all projects/tasks posting for online labor of which 45% were for software development and technology projects. This trend suggests the changing nature of employment in the IT-BPM sector. This trend was reaffirmed as 45% of the survey respondents viewed new ways of working such as freelancing as an important megatrend shaping the industry (Manyika, et. al. 2016).

Gig workers in India, according to the NITI Aayog since 2014, aggregators such as Ola and Uber have created around one million and 2.2 million jobs. The latest fair work India 2020 report estimates around 3.03 million platform workers and employees are employed across 11 most popular platforms in India. India has emerged as the 5th largest country for flexi staffing after US, China, Brazil and Japan. Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Telangana have most opportunities in terms of growth for the flexi-workers. Digital platforms have emerged as enablers for employment creation with the power to easily discover job seekers and job providers in the absence of middlemen. Digital technology enables two – sided markets which saw the emergence of e-commerce and online retailing platforms such as Amazon, Flipkart, Ola, Uber, Urban clap (now, Urban company), Zomato, Swiggy etc.. India has emerged as one of the largest countries for flexi staffing in the world (NITI Aayog Govt. of India Report; 2022).

## The Legal Framework for Gig Workers

One of the chief characteristics of gig workers is that they are generally considered ‘independent contractors’ and not ‘employees’ in the traditional sense. In conventional understanding, an employee is one, who provides services for an employer, and the employer has control over what he will do and how. On the contrary, an independent contractor also works for employers, but here employer has control only over the work done but not the method of acquiring that. Thus, it would be important to note that most gig platforms have been careful to describe their drivers as ‘partners’ and not ‘employees’, classifying them under an ‘independent contractor’ category (Abraham, R., and Shrivastava, A. 2019).

It is estimated that there were 68 lakh (6.8 million) gig workers in 2019-20, using both principal and subsidiary status, forming 2.4% of the non-farm workforce or 1.3% of the total workers in India. b. It is estimated that in 2020-21, 77 lakh (7.7 million) workers were engaged in the gig economy. They constituted 2.6% of the non-agricultural workforce or 1.5% of the total workforce in India. The gig workforce is expected to expand to 2.35 crore (23.5 million) workers by 2029-30. However, the vast majority of gig workers fall under the unorganized sector, hence deprived of the ‘Employees Provident Fund’ and the Employees’ State Insurance Schemes. The new draft law proposed by the Ministry of Labor and Employment (2024) keeps gig work outside the traditional employer-employee relationship and defines a gig work platform as an online-based platform where organization or individuals can solve specific problems or provides services against payment. The code does envisage social security benefits for both the platform and gig workers. However, this still does not recognize gig workers as ‘employees’. Thus, although the code does not equate gig workers with traditional employees, it does offer them certain benefits as directed by the government. The gig platform and the workers are listed under ‘unorganized worker’. They are deprived of some social security benefits available to the organized sector. These benefits could range from insurance and maternity benefits to pension and gratuity, typically partially funded by the employer. Since the Wage Code 2019 does not apply to gig workers, it does not offer minimum wage requirements. The Social Security Code 2019 has met with mixed reactions. While the government’s move to introduce such a code is certainly a step in the right direction, the mechanism has been left mostly open-ended and has a long way to go. The gig workers are expected to form 6.7% of the non-agricultural workforce or 4.1% of the total livelihood in India by 2029-30 (Sindwani, P., 2019).

## Challenges faced by gig-workers in India

No clear employment relationship: This is the main issue with the gig economy workers in India. Most of the time, it is the ambiguity around the rights of workers and the responsibilities of platforms that allows businesses to treat their gig workers as employees in terms of the control they exert upon them, but without any employee entitlements like insurance, medical benefits, employee’s provident fund, bonus or gratuity, etc. The gig employers in India treat gig workers as partners. If that is the case, then gig workers should have equal say on the remuneration and terms and conditions. Apart from that, gig workers should also have the flexibility to accept and reject offers without any ramifications. But that is not the case actually. No employment stability and heavy workload: The gig economy in the fundamental sense offers a work arrangement that works for everyone involved, but it is when the power dynamics come into the equation that the delicate balance is thrown off.

When the labour supply is high and more disposable, as, in the case of blue-collar workers in India, the gig workers have no power to influence payment offerings, work conditions etc. This makes them remain financially vulnerable without a predictable salary, navigating an uncertain career path, etc. For instance, Swiggy workers faced a continuous dip in pay, where base pay was reduced from Rs.35 to Rs.10 per delivery order, despite their brave deliveries during the pandemic. According to gig workers in India, the low payment often pushes them to work longer than 8 hours and work on all days of the week (Business Standard, 2024).

## Women in Gig Economy

There are large concerns about ‘women’s safety, the need for fair and non-exploitative labour practices, and access to benefits and insurance’. India’s gig economy has a long way to go before it can be called a gender-inclusive economy. The code on social security fails to address these concerns. The unorganised workers social security act (2008) was fraught with loopholes and failed to deal with gender based concerns. However, it was

the first stepping in mapping come out India's informal sector's social security net. A recent UNDP study suggests that women have great potential to join the gig economy in the coming days, given its flexible and remote-working characteristics. The pandemic lends further credence to this prediction, with a spike in women workers joining the gig workforce, in recent times.

While the Indian gig economy sets a promising stage of work opportunities its rapid expansion is worth noting. Resultantly, certain gaps within this work-model were inevitable, also, especially given the fairly unregulated space it has been operating out of, thus far. One such concern is the protection of women gig workers from workplace sexual harassment (SH). This is crucial, given the informal nature of the gig economy, which places giggers outside the purview of traditional employment rendering them especially vulnerable. On this, conventionally 'low-skilled' gigs (cleaning, beauty, transport, delivery) allude to worker's higher susceptibility to sexual harassment women with little or no education, who tend to opt for such gigs, may be unaware of SH's unacceptability. Further, assignment work on app based platforms already being gendered may discourage such workers from complaining, for fear of losing more work. The mainstreaming of the gig economy in India, especially during the pandemic, safety of women giggers, who are the key to the gig economy's growth, given its flexible and remote working nature, demands urgent consideration. According to an on-demand staffing platform, when women feel safe, secure, and valued, they are more likely to join the gig economy (IWWAGE, 2020).

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to Kenney and Zysman (2020), the platform economy is "one in which social and economic interactions are mediated online, often by apps". The 'Utopian' view is that emerging techno-economic systems allow society to be reconstituted, allowing producers to become 'proto-entrepreneurs', that can work on flexible schedules and benefit from these platforms. Conversely, the dystopian view states that new technology will result in undesirable consequences, with digital machines and artificial intelligence displacing work for a large popular population section. Regarding the nature of Gig Work, (Wood, et. al. 2019) posits that one of the differentiating factors of gig work is the platform-based 'rating systems'. This type of management can be understood as a customer-based management strategy significantly different from the traditional Taylorist approach. The workers were given relative freedom to do as they wished, and the 'control' would be established once the work was completed rather than during it. (Gobinda Roy et.al, 2020), reported a research article on the topic "Future of gig economy: opportunities and challenges ". In this article, they have discussed the current trends of gig economy along with its merits and demerits in global as well as the Indian context. The role of the digital platforms is crucial for bringing gig culture in developing countries, and in the remote corners of the world. Gig economy offers many opportunities to gig workers such as flexible work environment, working in interest areas, access to global job postings. However, it poses many challenges to freelancers in the form of less payment, lack of social benefit and job security. (Jamie Woodcock, 2020), reported an article on the topic "The impact of the gig economy". This article focussed with the preconditions that shape the emergence and dynamics of the gig economy. He highlighted the ten preconditions are; technological, digital legibility of work, combines both technological and social aspects, consumer attitudes and preferences, racialized relationships of work, social aspect and political economy, regulation, worker power, combination of political economy, dynamics of globalisation and outsourcings. He also examines the resulting labor market trends, the experience of workers, drawing on current research, the impact on society more widely. This article concludes with possible future directions, both positive and negative. Riley J. (2020), mentions the need for some regulation of the gig economy. According to his study, gig workers deserve basic market protections like any other employee. The existing regulatory initiatives mostly concern consumer protection issues and eliminate unfair competition among sectors. The paper posits that a potential solution would be to introduce a scheme that provides protections similar to those available to 'Small Business Workers' in unique commercial relationships. Another study by Gross, et. al. (2018) highlights the issues brought by the gig economy and its flexible employment patterns, emphasizing a need to understand and consider the view of work from a 'well-being' perspective, too, not just from an economic or employment law perspective. Several web-based reports and news portals published reports on Gig economy. According to a Digital Future Society report (2019), India is the second- largest freelancer market, and this app-based technology does away with the middleman. Also, from the recruiters' point of view, allowing gig work is cost- efficient. They generally do not provide paid leave or health care (and other securities)



to gig workers as they do to full-time workers. Regarding the Digital technology in gig economy, the technological Revolution, also known as the Fourth Industrial Revolution, has paved the way for significant changes in the nature of work. Djankov and Saliola (2018), in their article presented the findings from the World Development Report (2019) and mentioned that as a consequence of the overall development and distribution of digital infrastructure, there is an enabling environment in which on-demand services can thrive. In another report published in LiveMint by Salman and Varsha (2019), Delhi has emerged as a leading destination for migrant workers joining the country's tech-enabled gig economy, moving Bangalore to second place. Over the last eight years, two app-based cab service providers have collectively employed approximately 1.3 million drivers. Sindwani P. (2019), in her article published in Business Insider, mentioned that India is now the fifth largest country for 'Flexi-staffing'. It added 1.2 million Flexi workers in 2015 and is predicted to employ nearly three million by 2021. The joblessness among India's urban educated and uneducated youth looks at the gig economy as a 'stop-gap' solution until market conditions improve. The report posits that several workers join the gig force as a last resort, not a permanent career choice. As a result of the lack of regulation, gig workers find themselves working too long hours to meet incentives put forth by the platforms. Indian HR firm Team Lease estimates that 13 Lakh people have added to the gig economy in the second half of 2018-2019, showing a 30 per cent growth relative to the year's first half. Metros such as Delhi and Bengaluru emerged as the biggest drivers of this sector. The findings also reveal that 2/3rds of the workforce will be under 40 years. Chowdhry, B (2020), reported an article on the topic "Inside the winter of discontent for India's gig workers". He explained about the living and working conditions of the drivers and delivery workers. He highlighted that drivers are driving more than hours due to that they are facing more health problems, like backache, constipation, liver issues, waist pain and neck pain. The condition of the Zomato and Swiggy workers is no better. There is a complete absence of social security and protection too. The article also sheds a light on how gig workers are left in the when it comes to redressal of their grievances. He also examines about the incentive structure of the drivers and the food delivery workers.

### Statement of the Problem

Gig workers are facing numerous problems. Apart from the economic aspects such as low wages and income insecurity, they face lack of social security, poor health conditions due to over work load or long working hours. The women workers of gig economic sectors many of them has the problem of harassments, complaints etc. Their livelihood condition has been getting poor unless they go for long work hours. Work life balance has been tough for the workers to maintain since they are unaware of their nature of duty with respect to distance and tenure of clients or customers who made the orders to be delivered. The study focused on the need and motivation of the respondent towards gig economic sectors along with day-today issues faced by the workers in this sector. A Sociological lens has been installed to prob the above-mentioned categories by collecting the primary data with their analysis and the information gathered from the secondary sources also.

### Objectives:

- To assess the Socio-economic and demographic profile of gig workers.
- To probe the factors motivating the respondents to enter into gig economic sector.
- To evaluate the work culture and livelihood pattern of gig workers.
- To examine the health aspects of the workers in the gig economic sector.
- To explore the awareness level of safety and security principles.

### Significance of the study

Although a fairly new concept for India, the gig workers have become a significant part of the economy. Such workers are able to accumulate wealth which they can then invest into farm work. The pandemic has revealed a very significant role that gig workers play in the economy by virtue of their role as delivery drivers and agents. They ensured that basic necessities were reaching people at their homes. These workers also helped many

platform companies remain afloat during the pandemic and the resultant economic downturn. Due to the fast pace of urbanisation, this sector has high growth potential. Hence, the study is essential and has significance to ensure the gig workers' strength, Opportunities and as a result the way to avoid the threats and downfalls in many aspects.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is descriptive in nature. As the study focuses on analysis of working condition and health aspects of the persons working in the gig platform in India, it describes about the need of the gig economic sector and the awareness on the safety and security principles provided by the state Government for the workers and also related issues faced by the workers in the sectors. The study has been aimed to assess the data on the past and current situation of the gig economic sector from respective data sources.

### Pilot Study

In order to confirm the nature of respondents and to assess the conditions of field work the researcher has visited the area where the gig economic workers are actively found the places namely, T. Nagar, Ashok Nagar, Vadapalani, Nungambakkam and Chepauk. Such zones are comprising with samples of mixed economic profile that are poor, middle and rich economic classes.

### Sampling

The study comprises 100 gig economic workers from gig economic sectors were chosen by using purposive sampling technique.

### Data Collection and Analysis

Both primary and secondary data sources were employed in this study. The collected primary data were analysed descriptively through simple frequency table method and necessary graphical representations were provided along with interpretations.

## ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

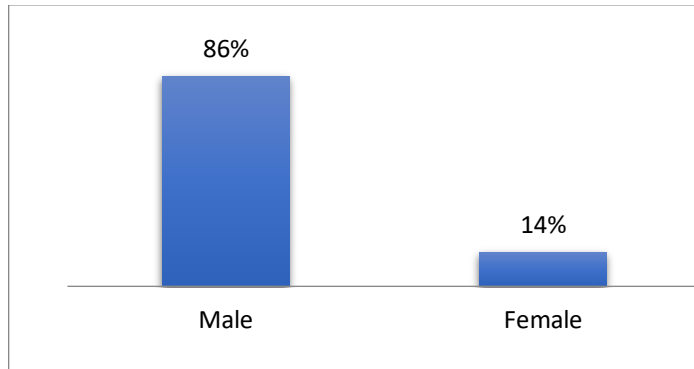
Table:1 Age-wise Composition of Employees of Workers of Gig economic sector

| AGE          | PERCENTAGE |
|--------------|------------|
| 18-25        | 24%        |
| 26-35        | 36%        |
| 36-45        | 32%        |
| 46 and Above | 8%         |

(Source-Primary data)

The above table describes that the majority of workers fall between the age group of 26 -35 (36%) in this sector. 32% of the workers are between the age category of 36 - 45. 24% of the workers are between the age group of 18 to 25; The meagre percentage namely 8% of the workers are in above 46 years in this sector.

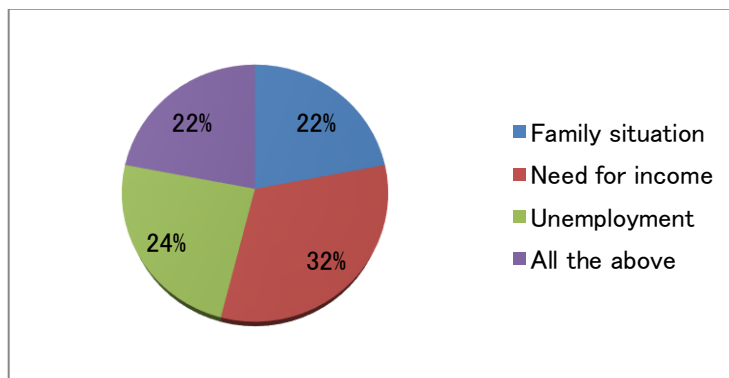
Fig.1 Gender-wise distribution of Employees



Source: Primary data

The above figure shows the gender categories of Employees in this sector. Majority 86% of the male respondents belonged to Swiggy, Zomato and Dunzo and about 14% of the female respondents were found. By analysing the above data from the field, clearly depicts that the gender gap is still prevalent in the gig economic sector. The male workers are greater in number than the female workers in the gig economic sector.

Fig-2 Reason for choosing this sector



(Source: Primary data)

It is clear from the above shown pie chart that the majority of the people (32%) have chosen this occupation for their income. There are 24% of the workers were responded that they have chosen this occupation due to the unemployment. There are 22% of workers have chosen this occupation for the family situation and 22% of workers have said that they have chosen this occupation for all the reasons (Family situation, Need for income, Unemployment). Further, the primary data brings out that 32% of the respondents have chosen this gig economic sector for the need of the income.

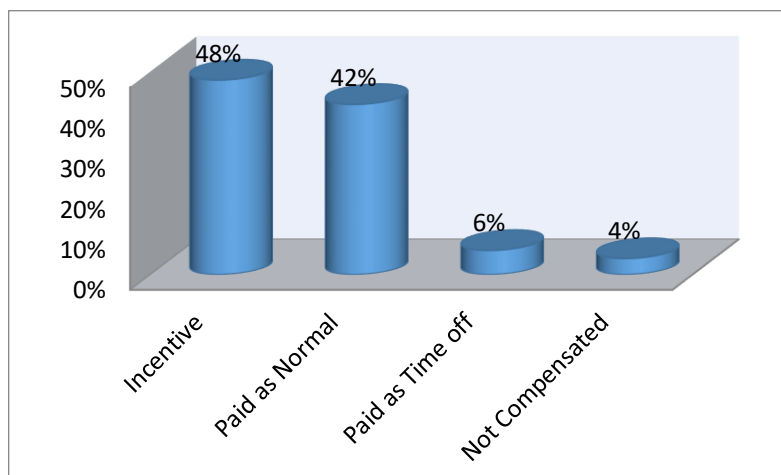
Table-2 Working hours of the Employees

| Hours              | Percentage |
|--------------------|------------|
| 2-4 Hours          | 2%         |
| 5-7 Hours          | 12%        |
| 8-10 Hours         | 14%        |
| 10 Hours and Above | 54%        |

(Sources: Primary data)

The table above cited has classified the working duration of respondents in gig economic sector per day. As per that, the majority (54%) of the workers have responded that they are working about 10 hours and above per day. There are 14% of the workers said as 8-10 hours per day. There are 12% of the workers belonged to the category of 5-7 hours per day. Remaining just 2% of the workers are working about 2-4 hours per day. By analysing the above data, its clearly shows that 54% of the workers are working for more than 12 hours per day (10 hours and above). Less number of workers are working little hours per day that too especially part time basis.

Fig. 3 Working Overtime



(Source: Primary data)

The figure above denotes about the compensation if they worked for overtime. Majority 48% of the workers answered that the company is providing an incentive if they work overtime or if they have achieved their target. There are 42% of the workers were responded that the company is paying a normal or moderate pay only if they have worked for an overtime. 6% of the workers have replied that they are paying as time off pay for them. 4% of the workers have answered that the company is not providing any particular compensation for their work. By analysing this figure, the greatest number of workers i.e. 48% were stated that the company is providing a proper pay as (incentives) if they work for overtime. Lesser number of workers i.e. 4% have stated that the company is not providing any particular compensation if they work for overtime or though they have achieved their target.

Table-3 Break Time received by the workers

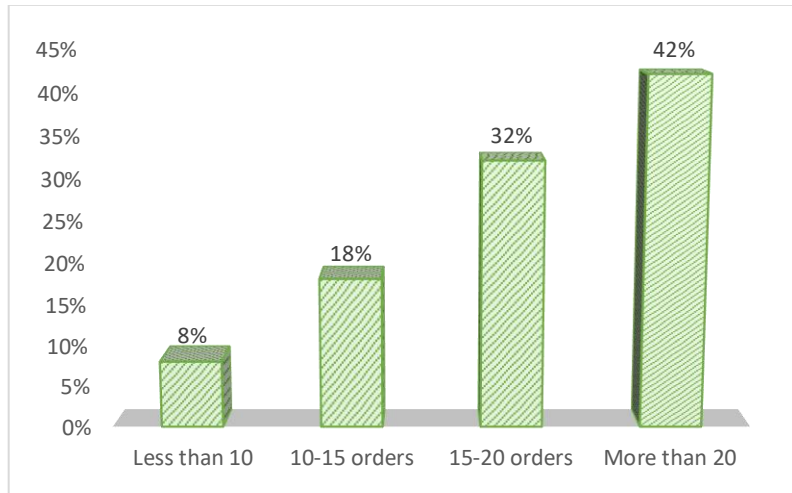
| TAKING BREAK | PERCENTAGE |
|--------------|------------|
| Yes          | 72%        |
| No           | 26%        |
| Sometimes    | 2%         |

(Source: Primary data)

The above table shows about having break in between their work time. The majority of the respondents i.e. 72% of the workers stated that they take break in between their working hours. There are 26% of the workers pointed that they are not taking break in between their working hours. The lesser number of the respondents i.e. 2% of the workers take sometimes if they need rest they will take a break in between their working hours. By analysing the above data, it's clear that the more workers are taking break in between their working hours in this gig economic sector.



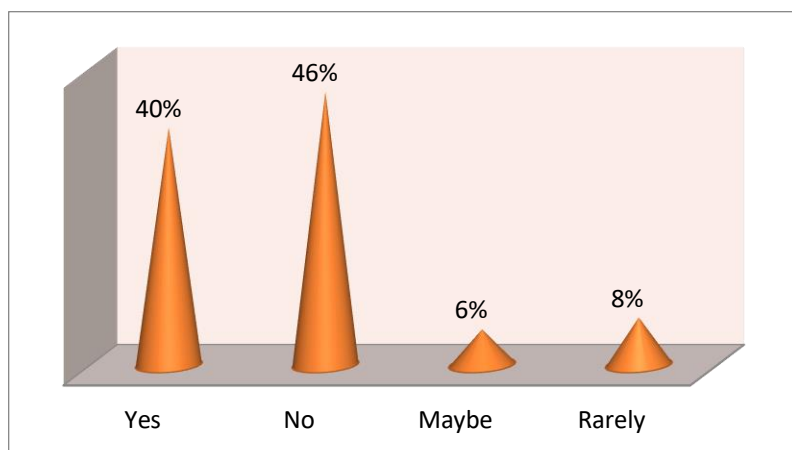
Fig. 4 Number of Orders per day achieved



(Source: Primary data)

Above figure shows that the workers providing number of orders/services per day on the platform. There are majority of the respondents i.e. 42% of the workers said that they are providing more than 20 services/orders per day on the platform. There are 32% of the workers said that they are providing 15 to 20 orders/services per day on the platform. There are 18% of the workers said that they are providing 10 to 15 services/orders per day on the platform. There is less number of the respondents i.e. 8% of the workers said that they are providing less than 10 orders/services per day on the platform. By analysing the above figure described that is majority of the workers are providing more than 20 orders/services that is upto 25 per day on the platform. The less number of respondents have said that they are providing less than 10 orders/services per day on the platform that to the people who are taking part time work only are providing less number of the orders/services per day on the platform.

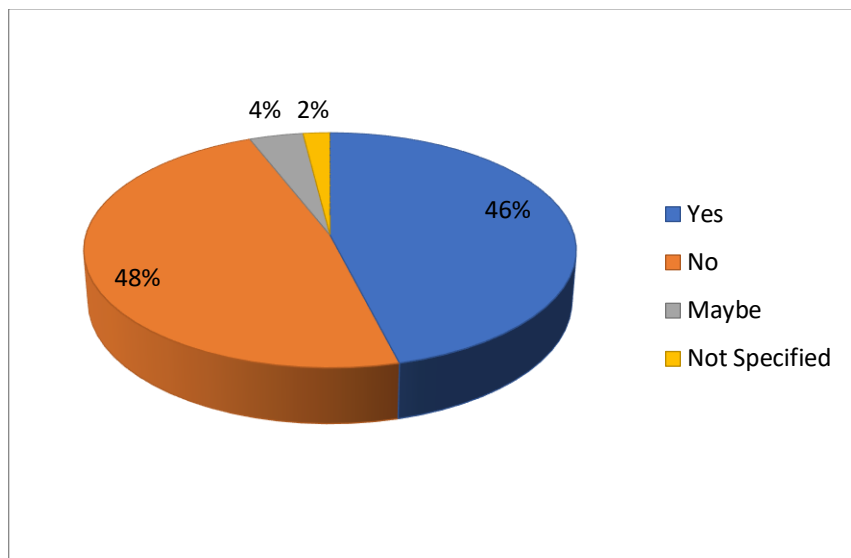
Fig. 5 Work Life Balance of the workers of Gig economy



(Source: Primary data)

The figure shows about the process of balancing between their work and their family. The 46% of the workers have said that they cannot be able to manage both their work and the family. The 40% of the workers have pointed out that they can be able to manage their work and as well as their family efficiently. The 8% of the workers have mentioned that rarely they are able to manage their work as well as with their family. The 6% of the workers have responded that maybe they could able to manage their work as well as their family. By analysing the above figure the majority (46%) of the workers have met difficulties while managing between work and their family due to over time work and heavy workload in this sector.

Fig. 6 Work Opting as per background qualification

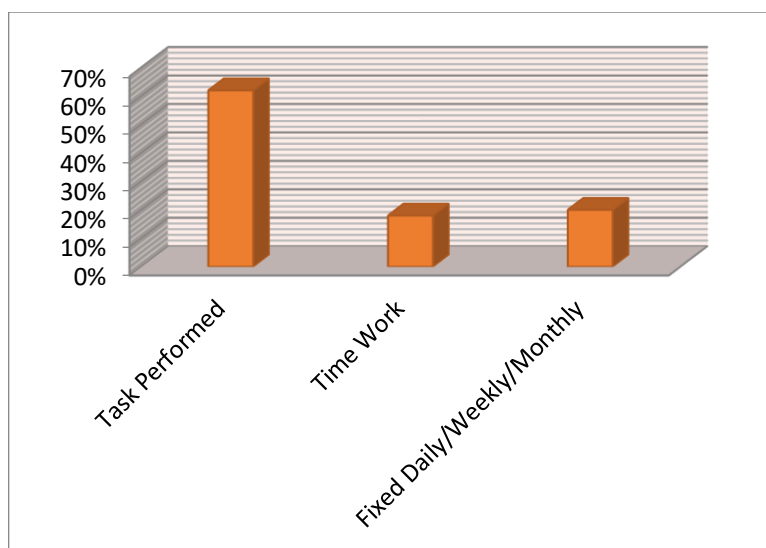


(Source: Primary data)

The above diagram shows about the qualifications match with their work. About the 48% of the workers have said that their qualification does not match with their work in this sector and 46% of the workers have said that their qualification has matched with their work. Meagre 4% of the workers have said that maybe that is partially yes or partially no on their qualification-match with their work. Remaining, only 2% of the workers were not interested to specify the answer to his question.

By analysing the above figure depicts that the majority of the respondents have said that their qualification does not match with their work in this sector. Due to the need of income or the family situations, they enter into this sector.

Fig. 7 Salary Based On



(Source: Primary data)

The above pie chart has shown about the type of salary the employees received in this sector. 62% of the workers are getting their salary based on their task performed. Nearly 20% of the workers have said that they are getting their salary on the basis of fixed daily/weekly/monthly. The 18% of the workers received their salary based on their working time. Therefore, majority of the workers are getting their salary based on the task performed on the platform.

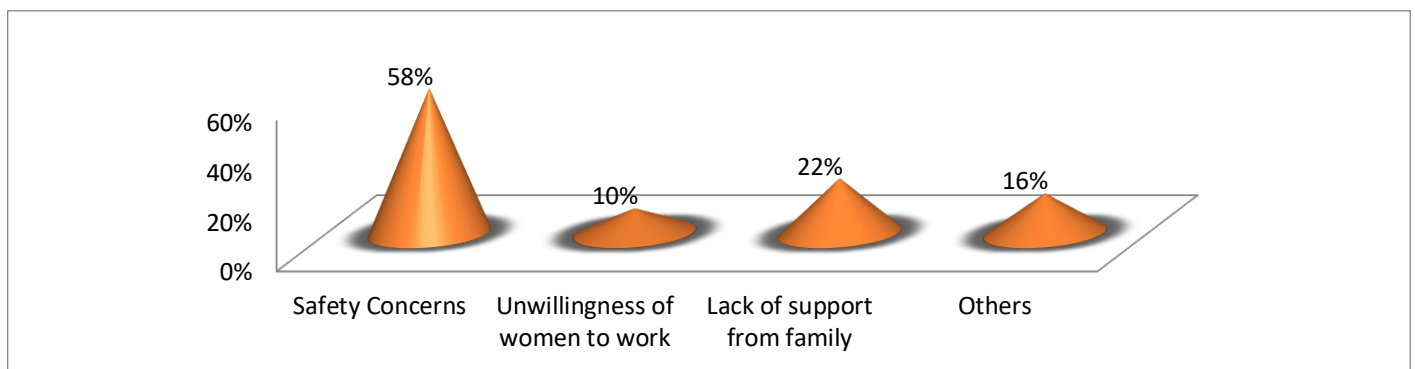
Table-4 Qualification of the Gig workers

| QUALIFICATION | PERCENTAGE |
|---------------|------------|
| Middle School | 6%         |
| High School   | 34%        |
| Graduate      | 48%        |
| Diploma       | 12%        |

(Source: Primary data)

The above table shows the qualification of the workers working in this sector. The majority i.e. 48% of the respondents are from the Graduation level. 34% of the respondents are from the High school level and about 12% of the respondents are from the diploma level. There are only about 6% of the respondents are from the middle school level.

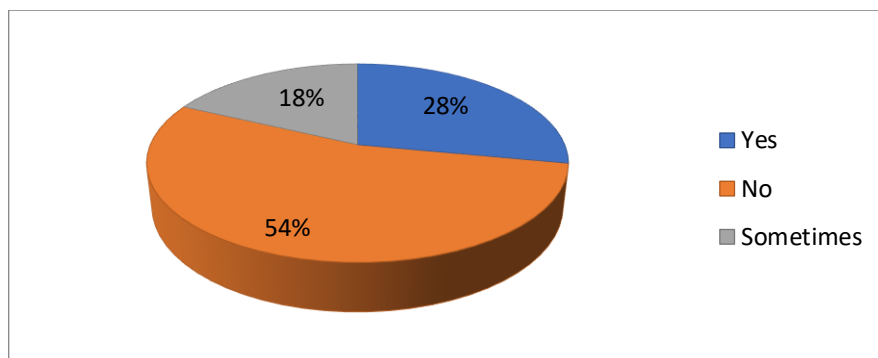
Fig. 8 Reason for the less participation of women



(Source:Primary data)

As per the figure shown above, the majority (58%) of the respondents have belonged to the category of ‘the safety concerns are the reason for the less participation of the women’. The 22% of the respondents have said that the lack of the support from family that made the women to less participate in this sector. 16% of the respondents have mentioned the other reasons such as the women workers are getting the less salary than the men workers, unable to drive the bike etc.10% of the respondents have expressed their unwillingness to work in this sector. Theefore, we could arrive that majority of the respondents have opted the safety concerns are the main reason for the less participation of the women to work in this sector.

Fig. 9 Safety conditions for Women workers

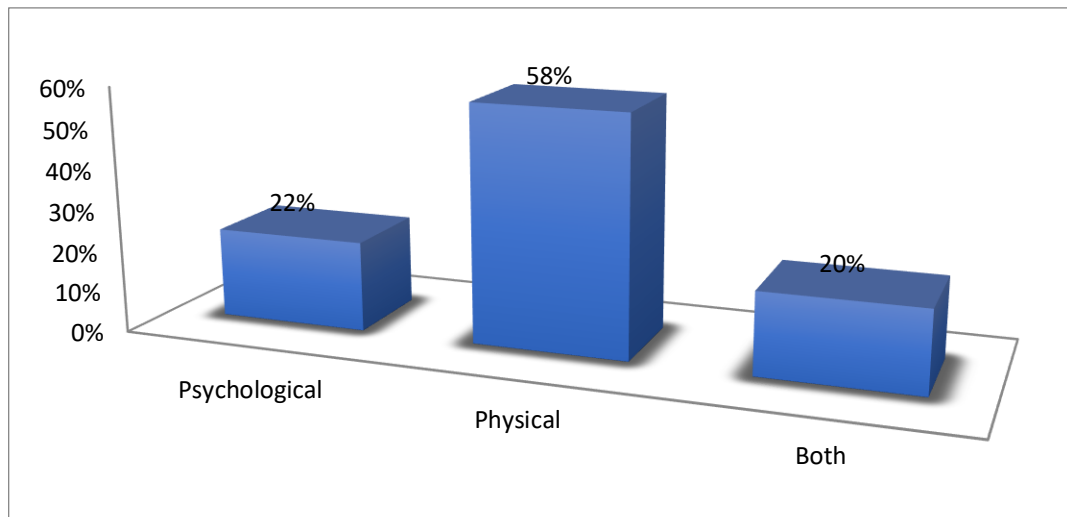


Source: Primary data)

There are 54% of the respondents have answered that this sector is no safety for the women workers ; about 28% of the respondents have pointed out that this sector is safer for the women workers; remaining,18% of the respondents have said that this sector is sometimes safer for the women workers. By analysing the above data it's found that the majority of women workers in this sector are in unsafe condition.

### Health aspects of the workers

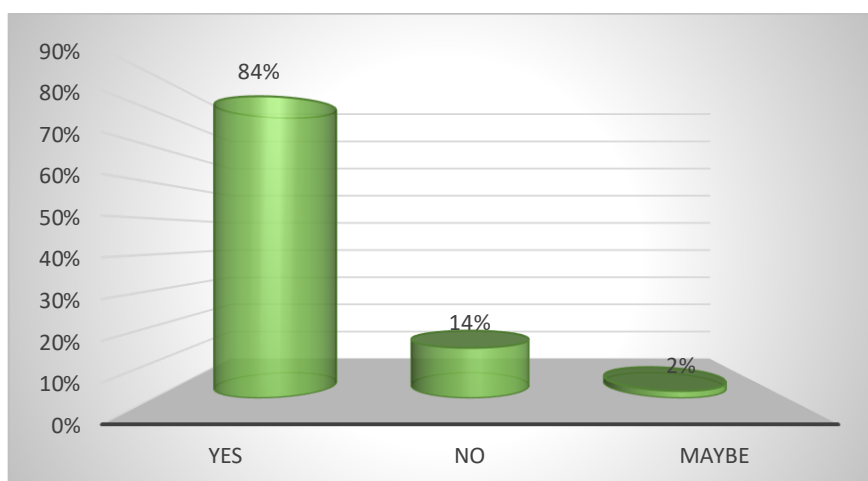
Fig.10 Reason for sick leave



(Source: Primary data)

The figure reflects that reason for the sick leave. As per primary the majority (58%) of the workers used to take leave for physical illness; 22% of the workers take sick leave due to psychological problems. About 20% of the workers reply that both (psychological and physical) illness are the reason for the sick leave. The physical illness such as body pain, joint pain etc are in this category. Stress, anxiety etc are few as psychological issues which are behind the reasons for taking sick leave among these employees.

Fig. 11 Gig economy is the way for Future



(Source: Primary data)

The data reflects on the opinion of gig workers on their preference with gig economy as their future. As per primary data, there are about 84% of the workers have believed that the gig economic sector is the way of their future. Nearly 14% of the workers were said that they did not believe that the gig economic sector is the way of their future. Only 2% of the workers have presumed that maybe the gig economic sector will take part for their future. Therefore, majority of them are on the side of gig economic oriented life for their future.

## Detailed Discussion with Few Case Studies

Interviews were conducted with the employees of various gig platforms such as Swiggy, Zomato and Dunzo. Many of the respondents gave a similar kind of response to the questions which were asked by the researcher. Hence, a comprehensive analysis of the inferences obtained from the entire interview process is given below.

When asked about the difficulties they faced, many respondents answered that the back pain is the major problem they face in this occupation. As they have to drive for a long period, they are easily affected by back pain even at a younger age. A Swiggy employee considered the expense incurred for bike and mobile as a major problem to sustain in this occupation. According to him, most of the employees working in the sector are migrants to the city. If there is any problem in the vehicle, it is difficult for them to manage it while they are on duty, as the place is entirely new to them. Also it is mandatory to own a mobile phone in this sector, which makes it a little difficult for the poor income households. Another employee from Zomato had expressed his opinion that the customer relations are the major concern for them. He has stated that some customers would ill treat them for some reasons like late delivery of products. The workers feel better to some extent when some customers greet them for their service.

Opinions were asked from the employees regarding the less participation of women in the sector. Almost all the three respondents gave the answer as the safety concerns for women. In certain places like huge apartments, women need to ensure their safety before delivering. A Swiggy employee stated that some customers would be purposefully ill-treating the delivery men and if it is a woman, the situation would be even worse. A Zomato employee stated that the traffic congestion and road safety would be the major factors affecting the participation of women in the sector. Also, they think that this sector is totally unsafe for women during night time and hence, they can't even work overtime to earn additional income.

When asked about the work life balance, the workers are of the view that they are able to efficiently manage their family and work in a balanced way. The workers can allocate their own timings which are feasible for them to work and limit the working hours as per their wish. Through this their work life balance is more efficient than the employees in other sectors. An employee of Dunzo is of the view that, not only the work life balance, they are able to balance their work and health as well. The workers are not under pressure to not take off when they are sick. They may take leave whenever they wish and this allows them to maintain a healthy state to some extent.

The researcher also asked for some suggestions from the employees that could benefit them. There were various suggestions from each of the respondents. The Swiggy employee suggested that there may be a uniform system of payment to the workers in the entire gig economic sector. According to him, the employees keep on changing the organization in the gig economy sector in search for better salary and benefits. This may lead to the concentration of the employees in one particular organization itself. Hence, to avoid this, a uniform payment method can be adopted. Another respondent who works for Zomato stated that the labor laws need to be reformed further and a separate section of legislation had to be brought in by the government for the welfare and safety of the workers. The Dunzo respondent has said that there must be some action taken to prevent the workers from using any alcoholic substance while on duty. According to him, the alcoholic intake during the working hours may destroy the reputation of the organization and the gig economy sector itself. This also has an impact on consumer satisfaction and safety as well.

## Theoretical Application

The study emphasises the motivational factors for entering into work, goal orientation, the methods of integration with corporate culture and customer's satisfaction etc of gig workers. Such observation attracts the theory of Structural functionalism propounded by Talcott Parsons AGIL model to be employed for this study. In which, 'A' denotes Adaptation (adapting with work culture and corporate attitude, 'G' denotes Goal attainment (Goal to be fulfilled towards worker's future need, 'I' denotes Integration (maintaining coordination and mutual participation), 'L' stands for Latency (latent relationship with clients and familial growth). On the other hand, Robert K Merton's Manifest (intended) and Latent (un-intended) functions are also equally applicable. In which the gig workers join the sector intentionally to achieve certain their aim and it becomes as the drive in their life



especially economic need. The Latent functions are un-intended namely additional intakes acquired in their life such as social security, awareness of policies, legal supports, recognition etc.

## Major Finding of the study

### Need and motivation to enter into sector

- It is clear that the majority of the workers (32%) have chosen this gig economic sector for the need of the income.
- 24% of the workers have chosen this gig economic sector due to the unemployment.
- 22% of the workers have the reason for choosing this sector for their occupation is because of family situation.
- 22% of the workers have chosen this sector for their occupation is due to all the reasons given above which is need of income, unemployment and family situation.

### Working condition and livelihood patterns of workers

- 54% of the workers are working more than 12 hours per day. Less of the workers were working less number of hours per day that too especially part time worker.
- 48% of the workers were responded that the company is providing an incentives if they work for overtime.
- 72% of the workers will take a break whenever in between their working hours.
- 28% of the workers are taking break more than 1 hour per day in between their working hours.
- The majority of the workers (42%) are providing more than 20 orders/services that are upto 25 per day on the platform.
- 62% of the workers have responded that they are getting their salary based on the task performed on the platform.
- 46% of the workers have been difficult for them to manage their work and the family due to the more than hours they are working in this sector.
- The majority of the workers (48%) of them are assuming that their qualifications do not match their work in this sector.
- 44% of the workers have believed that they are over qualified in working in this sector.

### Demographic profile of workers

- 36% of the workers are in the working age group than the young adults are working in this sector.
- The male workers are more than the female workers are working in this sector. It clearly depicts that the gender gap is still prevalent in the gig economic sector.
- The majority of the workers (68%) are working in this sector are married. Due to the family situation they are working in this sector.
- The majority of the respondents (34%) are from the scheduled caste or scheduled tribe and lesser of the respondents are from the other castes.

- The more number of the workers (88%) are from the religion of Hindu than the Muslim and the Christian.
- The majority of the workers (48%) are from Graduation level are working in this sector.
- 50% of the workers are getting more than 25,000 as their monthly salary. It clearly shows that the more number of the people are choosing this sector as their occupation for their income.
- The majority of the workers (58%) have responded that the safety concerns are the main reason for the less participation of the women to work in this sector.
- 54% of the workers have said that there are no safety concerns for the women to work in this sector.

### **Health aspects of the workers**

- 58% of the workers have the reason for the sick leave is physical illness than the psychological illness.
- 48% of the workers have responded that the pandemic does not make the things worse the situation had made so easy to work for them than the normal days.
- 56% of the workers have the habit of consuming alcoholic substance while in duty; due to the lot of stress in this sector they will consume alcoholic substance.
- 28% of the respondents have the habit of intake cigarette than the tobacco and alcohol substance while in duty.

### **Safety and security principles provided by the state**

- The majority of the workers (48%) were not aware about the labour laws provided by the state for this sector.
- The less number of the workers (26%) are aware about the labour laws provided by the state for this sector.
- 84% of the workers have believed that the gig economic sector is the way of the future.
- The less number of the workers (14%) of the workers did not believe that the gig economic sector is the way of the future.

## **CONCLUSION**

For the gig workers life is not as easy as it seems. The gig economy has provided employment to a very large number of people on a global scale but not every gig worker is happy and satisfied. It is because not all of them are highly skilled workers who have all the necessary skills to win in a highly competitive environment. A large number of them do it of their choice and are satisfied. For them the gig economy has brought higher autonomy and flexibility which is good in most cases but several benefits that were available to the traditional employees are not available to the gig workers. The compliance problems are already a problem for the companies. However, they need to care for their gig workers too. The gig workers themselves must also remain cautious because the definitions of success in the gig economy have also changed. This gig economy is the boon for many of the graduates because, the unemployment problem is obviously found in our society in many of the sectors. The processes such as Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization (LPG) have brought various changes in the existing society by proving the concept of new economy and new Organization methods. Such style of economic upgradation are widely spread across our country. As a result this gig economic sector is giving a special path for urbanites and the people who are waiting for the employability. Though, few of the negative attributes are featured in this sector many of the employees in this gig field are surviving with job satisfaction and self-interest. The study brought out a Sociological understanding by assessing gig economic work group through the lens of Socio-economic and demography, livelihood pattern, issues pertaining to their Physical /

Psychological wellbeing along with other related issues were detailly analysed with appropriate references. Both primary and secondary data gathered here are portraying almost similar outcome in this study is another milestone for the proof of the scientific approach followed here.

## Suggestions

A study cannot be concluded without appropriate suggestions at the end. This might be useful for any policy framing agencies to include these suggestions into consideration and frame policies according to it. The present study contains some suggestions which may be useful for the betterment of the gig economy sector and its workers.

- As the workers suggested, there may be an uniform system of payment for the employees which can also develop the gig economy as well
- Workers can be provided with more safety measures while on duty
- There shall be regular inspection for the workers to make them ensure that they follow the safety rules
- The participation of women may be encouraged further by giving them more security and benefits.
- Business managers must understand the needs of their gig workers and accordingly design their assignments and packages
- They must also create an HR contact point and also consider the legal and tax implications by hiring consultants.

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