



A STUDY ON THE GIG WORKERS IN THE CHENNAI CITY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO FOOD DELIVERY WORKERS

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ABSTRACT

The study examines the influence of Gig workers in the Chennai city with special reference to food delivery workers. Hence the study investigates the challenges faced by food delivery gig workers in Chennai, such as income instability, lack of social security, and health concerns. The study also analyses the gig workers job satisfaction attained through their working condition. The Respondents of this study, are the food delivery gig workers of all age group, who are working for Zomato, Swiggy, Faasos, Dunzo and Dominos are the most popular food ordering apps provide jobs in the Chennai city. This research is based on primary data, which is obtained by a primary survey using a well-structured questionnaire in order to meet the requirements of the stated objectives of this research study. The sample size of this research comprises 50. The study taken in the North and South regions of Chennai city.

Keywords: Gig workers, Food delivery Gig workers, food delivery app, Income instability, Lack of social security, Flexibility and Health concerns.

INTRODUCTION

Gig workers are individuals who work on a temporary or freelance basis, often for multiple employers or clients, and they are typically paid for the specific tasks or gigs they complete, rather than being traditional employees of a single company. Gig workers earn all or part of their incomes from short-term contracts under which they are paid for individual tasks, assignments, or jobs. The term comes from the world of the performing arts in which musicians, comedians, etc. are paid for their individual appearances, called "gigs." According to the survey, Covid-19 pandemic has also compelled companies and organisations to rethink the very nature of work. India stands to lose 135 million jobs because of the pandemic and this is likely to push the full-time workforce towards the gig workers. Moreover, many laid-off employees are focusing on developing skills to avail freelance job opportunities and become a part of this burgeoning economy.

Food delivery workers who work for platforms like Zomato, Swiggy, Faasos, Dunzo and Dominos are typically considered as gig workers. These workers have the freedom to choose their own working hours and the number of deliveries they want to undertake, giving them a level of flexibility, which is not usually found in a traditional employment. However, this flexibility can also mean that they may not receive benefits and protections that come with traditional employment, such as healthcare benefits, paid leave, and job security. This study aims to investigate the factors influencing individuals to engage in gig work, working conditions, challenges, and the impact of gig work on their lives, and their perceptions of job security and benefits of Food delivery gig workers in North and South Chennai, especially focusing on those who involved in the food delivery sector.

Overview of a Gig Economy

The Gig Economy is characterized by short-term contracts or freelance work as opposed to permanent jobs. It often involves connecting with customers through an online platform. For example, delivery boys of app-based food, consultants, bloggers. The petitioners have sought for declaring “gig workers” and “app-based workers” as “unorganized workers” or “wageworkers” within the meaning of Section 2(m) and 2(n) of the Unorganised Workers Social Welfare Security Act, 2008. According to the World Bank, around 6% of the world’s labour force is part of the gig economy. Globally, more than half of gig jobs are driven by demand for low-skilled, low-wage work. Only around 30% of them require specialized skills and expertise.

An estimated 56% of new employment in India is being generated by the gig economy companies across both the blue-collar and white-collar workforce. Global Gig Economy Index report has ranked India among the top 10 countries. India constitutes about 40% of freelance jobs offered globally. According to the FICCI, EY, and NASSCOM joint report on the future of jobs in India, with a 24% share, India is leading in terms of the online labour market globally.

Challenges faced by Gig Workers

Ambiguity on their Rights: It is the main issue with the gig economy workers in India. Employees have ambiguity in their rights of work and responsibilities even they are not provided with insurance, medical benefits, employees’ provident fund, bonus or gratuity, etc.

Financially vulnerable and increased working hours: In India blue-collar workers are high in labour supply and more disposable and they 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 example, Swiggy workers faced a continuous dip in pay, where base pay was reduced from ₹35 to ₹10 per delivery. Low payment often pushes them to work longer than 8 hours and work on all days of the week.

Steps taken to protect the gig workers

- Government should consider Food delivery gig workers under the Code on Social Security bill. If they considered under this bill, they are eligible for benefits like life and disability cover, old age protection, maternity benefits, provident fund, employment injury benefits, etc. So, the government should give due

effect to the Code immediately and provide them with basic human dignity to the Food delivery gig workers.

- Some of the foreign nations in the world are amending labour laws by granting employee status to these workers by guaranteeing minimum wage and welfare benefits, so the government of India should also consider by granting the food delivery gig workers with the status of employees of the aggregators. That would automatically provide them all the labor benefits like PF and ESI.
- The government should consider them by providing a loan scheme to become a independent entrepreneurs after working for certain years in this field this will end up their dependency on the employer companies. Also, the dream of self-reliance will come true.

OBJECTIVES

- 1.To study the challenges faced by the Food delivery gig workers like income instability, lack of social security, and health concerns
2. To analyse the gig workers job satisfaction attainment through their working condition.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted with 100 respondents. Random technique was adopted for study. Samples were collected from 100 Food delivery gig workers who were working in the Chennai city under Swiggy, Zomato, Uber Eats and Dunzo. Primary Data collected through 'Questionnaire Method'. The study also focuses on Secondary data collected from various books, National & international Journals, publications from various websites which focused on the Food delivery gig workers.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The researcher used both primary and secondary sources of data collection. The Primary data collected are analysed through Chi-square Test to validate the hypothesis.

LIMITATIONS

1. Paper has restricted its study only with the food delivery gig workers alone.
2. The study has constrained its focus only to Chennai city and also limited its sample to 100 workers.

PRIMARY DATA ANALYSIS

Random technique was adopted for the selection of study area. A sample of 100 respondents was taken for the study. Statistical Analysis through Chi-Square

1. Challenges faced by the Food delivery Gig workers.

Chi-square test is used to find whether there is any relationship between the Challenges faced by Food delivery Gig workers and Workers affected by the challenges.

Challenges faced by Food delivery Gig workers	Income Instability	Lack of social security	Health concerns	Total
Workers affected by the challenges				
High	49	5	16	65
Low	10	9	11	35
Total	59	14	27	100

Source: Primary Data

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between the Challenges faced by Food delivery Gig workers and Workers affected by the challenges.

Alternative Hypothesis: There is significant relationship between the Challenges faced by Food delivery Gig workers and Workers affected by the challenges.

Calculated value = **14.12**

Table value of 0.05 = 5.99 Table value of 0.01 = 9.21

Inference: Hence the calculated value is greater than the table value at both the significance level. So, the Null Hypothesis is rejected and there is significant relationship between the Challenges faced by Food delivery Gig workers and Workers affected by the challenges.

The challenges faced by food delivery gig workers, such as income instability, lack of social security, and health concerns, are interconnected. Income instability is a prominent issue, the study has analysed 100 workers who are engaged in this job and it has shown that Workers affected by income instability are 59, in that 49 are highly affected and 10 are at a low level. As gig workers often rely on fluctuating earnings dependent on factors like order volume and tips. This instability makes it challenging for them to plan and budget effectively, which will pave to a financial uncertainty.

Another challenge faced by the workers is lack of social security. According to the analysis 5 of the workers only highly affected and 9 of them are affected at a low level. It states that these workers are not much bothered about their work time security. But other employees often benefit from social security measures like health insurance, retirement plans, and unemployment benefits etc., Gig workers, however, typically lack these safety nets, which leaves them into vulnerable situation in times of crisis or unexpected expenses.

Study states that 16 workers are highly affected due to health concerns and 11 are affected at a low level. Health concerns arise from the nature of their work itself. Delivery workers are constantly on the move, facing risks such as accidents, fatigue, and exposure to external elements. Moreover, the lack of employer-provided health insurance makes it difficult for them to access affordable healthcare, increasing the burden on their overall well-being. Thus, food delivery gig workers of all age group, who are working for Zomato, Swiggy, Faasos, Dunzo and Dominos in the Chennai city are predominantly affected with above challenges has been proved with the

analysis. While the gig economy, offers flexibility, often comes at the cost of job security and comprehensive benefits, leaving workers grappling with the intricate issues of income, social security, and health.

2. Gig workers attained job satisfaction through their working condition.

Chi-square test is used to analyse whether there is any difference in the attainment of job satisfaction and their working conditions.

Working condition \ Job Satisfaction	Reasonable working hours	Work Place Transparency	Total
Satisfied	24	14	38
Not Satisfied	46	16	62
Total	70	30	100

Source: Primary Data

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant difference between the attainment of job satisfaction and their working conditions.

Alternative Hypothesis: There is a significant difference between the attainment of job satisfaction and their working conditions.

Calculated value = **3.41**

Table value for 0.05 = 3.84

Table value for 0.01 = 6.63

Inference: The calculated value is less than the table value. So, the Null Hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the attainment of job satisfaction and their working conditions.

The study states that Job satisfaction and working conditions are indeed closely intertwined. But the reasonable working hours and workplace transparency, have no significant impact on individual's job satisfaction has been proved with the above analysis. Only 24 respondents among 70 have stated they are satisfied with the Reasonable working condition but 46 of them stated not satisfactory this has been proved that no significant difference for job satisfaction. In a practical life Reasonable working hour contribute to a healthier work-life balance, reducing stress and fatigue. But for this job excessively long or unpredictable hours can lead to dissatisfaction because delay deliver will pave way for dissatisfaction among customers which in turn lead to loss of Job.

Workplace transparency is not satisfied by 16 and satisfied by 14 among the study respondents. Knowing what to know is important in this job only the customers address and what to deliver is needed for this job other things which transparent in other jobs will not provide job satisfaction.

Conclusion

With a population of over 1.3 billion, and a majority of them below the age of 35, India needs the growth of a “gig economy” to create large scale employment for a semi-skilled and unskilled workforce. The NITI Aayog report on gig and platform economy estimated that in 2020-21, India had about 7.7 million gig workers, which constituted 1.5 per cent of the total workforce in the country. The gig workforce is expected to expand to 23.5 million by 2029-30, forming 4.1 per cent of the total jobs. When the platforms of food delivery gig workers first launched, they were offering higher incentives to attract them, but as the number of food delivery workers increased it has reduced. Only part-timers and in-between-jobs people do such jobs. Whenever they get a better opportunity, they immediately leave the food delivery job. It is because of longer hours, tough routine, fewer wages, and risk of being exposed to all kinds of weather. So, the government has to hand-hold this sector and help it to grow by solving the problems of gig workers. The need of the hour is to create comprehensive policies and processes that give clarity to the way the gig economy should function.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Stalin has announced to set up a separate welfare board for this gig workers especially after hearing the complaints of Food Delivery Gig workers. The complaints are, after increase in the fuel prices also they are not offered higher commissions. Companies are denying them if they fail to meet the daily targets etc., So the situation can change in the future as the Administrators are opening their eye on this Food Delivery Gig workers

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