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Gig Workers in Chhattisgarh: Emerging Opportunities in the New Economy

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Abstract: Recently, Chhattisgarh's workplace culture has undergone a fundamental shift. The fourth Industrial Revolution and the existence of a workforce made up of several generations with different needs have sped up the process. While many industries were struggling, on the one hand, notions like virtual reality, flexible time, flexible workspaces, and flexible workforce became realities for a select few. A change was noticed. There have been many part-time or temporary positions in the delivery, home services, food and beverage, and e-commerce industries that are ideal for freelancers and people searching for short-term assignments. These individuals, also known as gig workers, have helped Chhattisgarh develop and make significant contributions to the gig economy. It's interesting to note that both professional and unskilled people turned to the gig economy for relief. Amazon, Flipkart, Uber, Ola, and Urban Company are just a few of the platforms that have been brought to Chhattisgarh that offer gig jobs, whether they are rural or urban. The study's goals are to comprehend the gig workforce and gig economy, the advantages it provides to workers and businesses, its impact on the Chhattisgarh economy, and the function of gig employment platforms. The researchers continue to explore the problems faced by gig workers and potential fixes.

Key words: Gig workers in Chhattisgarh, Gig economy, Gig employment platforms, opportunities, challenges, flexitime, contractual.

Introduction

The growth of the gig economy has recently changed the global labour market and provided new, flexible opportunities for workers in a variety of industries. The central Indian state of Chhattisgarh is not exempt from this pattern. There are many opportunities now available for people looking for flexible employment, financial freedom, and the capacity to use their skills and assets thanks to the rise of gig labour in Chhattisgarh. Gig work refers to short-term, project-based engagements where people offer

their talents or knowledge on a flexible basis. It is also referred to as freelance, on-demand, or contingent labour. These jobs can include driving for ridesharing companies, offering graphic design assistance, delivering groceries, or even renting out extra rooms through home-sharing websites. The lack of long-term contracts distinguishes gig work from traditional employment and gives workers more freedom over their schedules and work-life balance. With its expanding population and diverse economic environment, Chhattisgarh has developed into a favourable environment for the expansion of gig labour. The gig economy has significantly increased in popularity in the state's capital, Raipur, as well as other prominent cities including Bilaspur, Durg, and Korba. Several interrelated variables, such as rising smartphone adoption, shifting consumer behaviour, and the demand for flexible work arrangements, have contributed to this. In Chhattisgarh, one of the major benefits of gig work is its capacity to solve the problem of underemployment and unemployment. Due to the lack of employment possibilities in traditional industries, many people in the state are turning to gig work. The gig economy provides a workable answer for anyone wishing to augment their income, from a competent professional to a recent graduate considering different career possibilities. Additionally, gig labour gives people the freedom to launch their own enterprises and become entrepreneurs. It enables them to display their abilities, establish a name, and grow a clientele. Chhattisgarh's innovation and economic expansion are being driven by this entrepreneurial spirit, which is helping the state's overall development. We will examine the numerous industries in Chhattisgarh where gig possibilities have evolved, the difficulties faced by gig workers, and the possible effects of the gig economy on the state's economy in this series on gig labour. In-depth discussions of specific gig work instances in industries including transportation, e-commerce, hotels, creative services, and more will follow. We seek to shed light on the transformative potential of the gig economy and the developing prospects it provides to the new economy in the state by exploring the experiences and tales of gig workers in Chhattisgarh.

Literature Review

Chisty et al. (2007) The author looked for a connection between a person's financial state and their relationship to their social status. According to his study, the main factors influencing the professional preferences of Bangladesh's young population are financial gain, social standing, favourable career possibilities, employment security, and parental influence. They discovered that 23.8% of graduates chose a career in multinational companies over any other job, while 38.7% of graduates preferred banking. Their study found that 8.2% of pupils wanted to become industrialists, whereas 11.7% preferred teaching.

HerShatter and Epstein (2010) The millennial representatives appear to exhibit the accompanying characteristics, according to HerShatter and Epstein (2010). New college graduates naturally go toward a stable situation that assures them of validation, reward, and advancement in their careers when they accomplish success. Additionally, people between the ages of 20 and 30 like simple architecture. Thirdly, recent college graduates value work-life balance highly and are likely to choose careers that strike a balance between work stability and a healthy personal and professional life. Finally, people in their 20s and 30s have strong business-related needs and desire individualized relationships with directors. Young adults between the ages of twenty and thirty are more willing than those of other ages to confine themselves to preexisting hierarchical foundations, to work with developments, and to collaborate and draw in with people around them. However, people between the ages of twenty and thirty who are also solid should be respected, dealt with, and acknowledged. When organizations can offer individualized consideration, a stable culture, and a fair system to recognize and reward their efforts, the twenty to thirty-year-old may be astonishingly faithful.

Bajwa, U. et al. (2018) classified the vulnerabilities of gig workers as platform-based, precarious, and occupational vulnerabilities in their study. They discovered that these flaws put gig workers' rights to

health in danger. to more fully comprehend how technology could motivate non-traditional workers in businesses.

Jabagi, N., Croteau, et al. (2019) In the absence of human supervision and help, their proposed theory offers a novel viewpoint on how gig firms might employ easily accessible social media technology to inspire platform workers.

Watson, G. P. (2021) agency gig workers, conventional gig workers, gig products providers, gig service providers, and gig data providers. Comparisons of their profiles were done based on resource limitations and the demands that gig workers must meet.

Highlights by Chhattisgarh Staffing Federation on Flexi Staffing Industry 2021:

- In 2022–2023, the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) of Chhattisgarh was estimated to be Rs. 4.38 trillion (US\$ 57.34 billion) at current exchange rates. Between 2015–16 and 2022–23, the state's GSDP (in Rs.) increased at a CAGR of 9.98%.
- Currently, Chhattisgarh is one of the few states with a surplus of electricity. The Chhattisgarh province's Korba district is referred to as India's electricity capital. Additionally, it is one of the few states where utility-based electricity is profitable. Chhattisgarh had a total installed capacity for electricity generation of 13,439.52 MW as of August 2022, with 8,805.79 MW coming from private utilities, 1,971.05 MW from state utilities, and 2,662.68 MW from central utilities.
- Chhattisgarh's greatest asset is its mineral wealth. It is a top producer of minerals like dolomite, iron ore, and coal. Additionally, the state has sizable quantities of bauxite, limestone, and quartzite. 35.4% of India's reserves of tin ore are held by the state. The only state in India to generate tin concentrates was Chhattisgarh.
- One of the most popular investment locations in India is Chhattisgarh. Between April 2000 and March 2020, the state (including Madhya Pradesh) attracted a total of US\$1.43 billion in foreign direct investment (FDI). The amount of FDI that entered Chhattisgarh between October 2019 and December 2021 was \$1.01 billion. A total of 98 IEMs with a proposed investment of Rs. 31,564 crores (US\$ 4.12 billion) have been submitted in Chhattisgarh for 2021. 25 IEMs with a proposed investment of Rs. 5,317 crores (US\$ 645.46 million) were submitted in the state in July 2022. Total merchandise exports from Chhattisgarh are estimated at US\$ 1,278.69 million in FY20, US\$ 2,320.29 million in FY21, US\$ 3,388.69 million in FY22, and US\$ 1,311.06 million in FY23 (until August 2022).

Objectives

- To understand gig workers and the gig economy.
- To understand the contribution of the gig economy and the role of gig employment platforms.
- To study the benefits, it offers to the employee/employer.
- To understand the issues faced by gig workers and the possible solutions.

Research Methodology

The researchers conducted a study using secondary sources, such as journals, websites, and newspaper articles, to better understand the gig economy, gig workers, their contributions, advantages, and problems. Analysis of the secondary data produced the discussions and conclusions.

Overview of the Gig Economy and gig workers:

The term "gig economy" refers to a labour market where short-term, freelance, and on-demand job arrangements are common. People often work as independent contractors or freelancers in this economy, accepting temporary or project-based assignments that are frequently facilitated through online platforms or mobile apps. Individuals who engage in the gig economy are known as gig workers. They don't work as typical employees but rather on a task- or project-by-task basis, frequently for a number of different employers or clients. There are gig workers in a variety of sectors, including transportation (drivers for ride-hailing services), delivery services, online marketplaces, professional services (freelancers, consultants), and more.

The following are some key traits of the gig economy and gig workers:

- **Flexibility:** People can pick when, where, and how much they want to work thanks to gig work. They oversee their schedules and are free to accept jobs that suit their interests.
- **Digital platforms:** Online platforms and apps that connect freelancers with clients or customers are a common source of gig labour. By serving as mediators, these platforms make it easier to link gig workers with gig opportunities.
- **Diverse work arrangements:** Gig workers engage in a variety of employment arrangements, including driving passengers, delivering items, running errands or other small jobs, selling professional services, or executing tasks.
- **Status as an independent contractor:** Gig workers are frequently categorized as independent contractors as opposed to employees. They do not receive standard job benefits like health insurance or paid time off, and they are responsible for their own taxes, social security contributions, and benefits.
- **revenue volatility:** Due to the nature of project-based or on-demand work, gig workers frequently encounter revenue variations. Depending on how many gigs they take on and how in-demand their services are, their profits may fluctuate,
- **Challenges and controversies:** Discussions about worker classification, labour rights, and social protection have been prompted by the gig economy. Critics claim that gig workers may receive insufficient pay, few benefits, and brittle job security. To address these issues, appeals have been made for better labour laws and rights

It is crucial to remember that the gig economy and gig employment can have both favourable and unfavourable effects on employees, companies, and the whole economy. Depending on the country and industry, the gig economy's effects and dynamics may differ.

Contribution to the economy of Chhattisgarh and the function of platforms for gig work:

A state in central India, Chhattisgarh is renowned for its abundant mineral resources, agriculture, and developing industrial sector. Even though Chhattisgarh's traditional economy has largely depended on industries like mining, steel, power, and agriculture, the rise of gig job platforms has begun to have an impact on how the economy of the state is shaped.

Here are some contributions and information about the function of platforms for gig work in Chhattisgarh:

- **Job opportunities:** Gig employment platforms have broadened the range of employment options in Chhattisgarh. They offer a platform for people with a variety of skills and specialities to find employment in industries including delivery, transportation, hospitality, home services, and more. These platforms give employees access to flexible work schedules and other sources of revenue.

- **Small business ownership and entrepreneurship:** Platforms for gig work enable people to launch their own small enterprises. Using these platforms, gig workers can sell their skills directly to clients instead of going via customary middlemen or intermediaries. In Chhattisgarh, this encourages entrepreneurship and the expansion of micro and small companies
- **Digital inclusion:** Gig employment platforms use digital technologies to operate, which gives Chhattisgarh potential for digital inclusion. Employee interaction with these platforms exposes them to online markets and digital tools, which can help them develop their digital abilities and access a larger consumer base. The state's overall economic growth is aided by this digital inclusion and literacy.
- **Flexibility and work-life balance:** Platforms for gig labor give workers in Chhattisgarh the freedom to choose their working hours, accept gigs in accordance with their availability, and balance work with other obligations. This flexibility is especially useful for people who may have other obligations or want to seek other sources of income.
- **Utilization of skills:** In Chhattisgarh, gig job platforms give people a place to use their unique skills and abilities. Online platforms, for instance, allow independent designers, authors, programmers, or artists to locate clients and market their services. This use of skills supports the expansion of the state's knowledge- and creativity-based economies.
- **Concerns and challenges:** Although platforms for gig work offer opportunities, they also pose difficulties. Chhattisgarh workers may experience problems with respect to fair pay, working conditions, social security, and benefits. Effective regulations and procedures are required to guarantee that gig workers are fairly treated and are sufficiently protected.

Gig employment platforms are progressively contributing to the Chhattisgarh economy by opening up new employment opportunities, encouraging entrepreneurship, advancing digital inclusion, and utilizing specialized skills. In order to ensure that the gig economy runs within a framework that protects the rights and well-being of gig workers, it is crucial to address the obstacles.

Benefits of gig work include:

Gig employment has several advantages for both companies and employees, which helps explain why it's becoming more and more common in the job market. Here are some major advantages of gig work:

- **Flexibility:** One of the main benefits of gig work is the freedom it offers. Gig workers are free to decide how much, when, and where they want to work. They are able to determine their own schedules, which is advantageous for people who have personal obligations, are students, are caretakers, or are trying to find a work-life balance.
- **Additional revenue sources:** Through gig work, people can generate cash from a variety of sources. When they have free time or are unemployed, they can accept gigs, which gives them the chance to augment their primary income. This extra money might be utilized to achieve financial objectives, settle debts, or put money aside for the future.
- **Numerous work experiences:** Gig employment sometimes features brief or project-based tasks that expose employees to a range of professional opportunities. This enables people to learn new skills, increase their knowledge, and investigate various areas or industries. It can also serve as a stepping stone for people who are changing careers or trying to develop a body of work.
- **Opportunities for entrepreneurship:** Gig work can be a stepping stone to entrepreneurship. Based on their talents and abilities, many gig workers launch their own small firms or freelance businesses. They may advertise their services, acquire customers, and build their brands via gig platforms. This

element of entrepreneurship can result in self-empowerment and the capacity to direct one's own career path.

- **Work-life integration:** The possibility of enhanced work-life integration exists with gig jobs. Gig workers can designate time for personal pursuits, family obligations, or following other hobbies because they have the freedom to choose their own schedules. This adaptability may enhance general well-being and job satisfaction.
- Global market access is now possible for gig workers thanks to the growth of online platforms. They are not restricted to local business chances and are able to serve clients or customers from various geographical areas. By expanding the consumer base, more labour and money are potentially available.
- **Learning and skill development:** In order to compete in the market, gig jobs frequently need employees to pick up new talents or hone ones they already have. Personal and professional development might result from this component of constant learning. Gig workers can diversify their skill sets, change with the times, and improve their employability.

While gig employment has many advantages, it's crucial to keep in mind that there are drawbacks as well, including unpredictable pay, a dearth of benefits, and a lack of job security. It is crucial that both employees and legislators work through these issues and provide an atmosphere that respects the rights and well-being of gig workers.

Gig economy and gig worker-related issues

While the gig economy offers benefits, it also has several problems and difficulties that affect gig workers. The following are some of the main worries about the gig economy:

- **Lack of employment benefits:** Because gig workers are frequently classed as independent contractors rather than employees, they are not eligible for benefits like paid time off, health insurance, retirement plans, or worker rights. Financial instability and restricted access to necessary safety nets may result from this lack of advantages.
- **Income instability:** The irregular and unexpected nature of gig employment is frequently a defining feature. Due to swings in demand, seasonal conditions, or competition, gig workers' pay may change over time. Workers may find it challenging to plan their finances, put money down for the future, or maintain a consistent level of life due to this income unpredictability.
- **Limited job security:** The job stability that comes with traditional employment is often absent for gig workers. There is no assurance of continued work, therefore they frequently rely on finding gigs consistently to support their income. Finding continuous work may be difficult for gig workers, which can lead to volatility and uncertainty in their financial situation.
- **Uncertain worker classification:** Whether gig workers should be considered independent contractors or employees is frequently up for discussion and legal contention. Workers who are misclassified may not get the labor rights and protections to which they are lawfully entitled as employees, such as the right to overtime compensation, minimum wage, and protection against unfair treatment. For the purpose of securing proper rights and protections, worker classification must be made clear.
- **Lack of collective bargaining power:** Gig workers are frequently not unionized or a part of collective bargaining units because they are independent contractors. Due to their lack of collective power, gig workers may find it difficult to change industry norms or negotiate appropriate wages and working conditions. Individual gig workers may have little influence in addressing their concerns if they lack collective representation.

- **Overreliance on ratings and reviews:** To assess the effectiveness and reputation of gig workers, many gig platforms place an excessive amount of dependence on customer ratings and reviews. As a result of this system's propensity for subjectivity and bias, employees may find it difficult to maintain consistent ratings or respond to harsh criticism. A worker's ability to acquire new jobs may be impacted by unfavourable evaluations or poor ratings.
- **Limited access to social protections:** Gig workers frequently experiences barriers when trying to receive social safeguards like disability insurance, workers' compensation, or unemployment benefits. Due to the structure of the gig economy, it may be difficult to ascertain who qualifies for these benefits, making gig workers more susceptible to illness, accident, and unemployment.

To address these problems, a comprehensive strategy that incorporates worker rights, fair labour laws, and social safety nets for gig workers is necessary. To come up with solutions that strike a balance between flexibility and innovation and the rights and well-being of gig workers, policymakers, platforms, and other stakeholders must work together.

Suggestions for Solutions

In this highly competitive era, the economic system must adapt to the needs of the new world. It will be difficult to adapt the organizational culture, its programs, processes, and rules to the new working environment of a gangster who is a free agent or a freelancer because they were all originally created for a full-time employee. The following remedies are suggested by the researchers as a means of easing the difficulties faced by gig workers: Right Leadership- Leading in this new era of the gig economy is undoubtedly fraught with difficulties. There should be more mentoring and training initiatives. Regulatory Changes – The gig economy is perceived to be lacking in key labour benefits. Future gig workers should have access to the same advantages that are currently granted to employees in the formal sector, including provident funds, group insurance, health benefits, and numerous social security benefits. The Social Security Code bill was introduced in Parliament in September 2022. When fully implemented, this bill will give an extra layer of security for gig workers. As a result, the gig workers would qualify for social security payments under the category of unorganized labour. They would receive the most sought-after insurance and health benefits. Additionally, gig workers would receive a payment equal to 2 to 6 per cent of an aggregator's revenue. A Social Security Fund will be created to offer old-age payments as well as death and disability insurance. The ISF report supports the idea that an increase in temporary workers would push for a formalization of the labour force. Pay and additional perks: Numerous independent platforms have already taken action to provide their staff with the necessary benefits. Urban Company has reduced the commissions it pays to its staff and now allows up to two cancellations without penalty. Workplace conditions: It is essential that firms who hire gig workers offer a comfortable workplace. While gig workers may not have the best working circumstances, high output is demanded of them. Gig workers will gain the fundamental skills necessary to work in businesses through vocational training, which will aid with skill upgrading for inclusive growth. The Training & Development team will make special efforts to assist the gig workers in honing technical and soft skills that will help them develop competency and be more productive at work.

Conclusion:

Chhattisgarh freelance workers are taking advantage of new prospects in the modern economy. There are now more opportunities for flexible work schedules, entrepreneurship, and digital inclusion in the state because of the gig economy and gig employment platforms. Benefits of gig employment include flexibility, additional sources of income, a variety of work environments, and the potential for work-life integration. The difficulties gig workers in Chhattisgarh encounter must, however, be addressed. It is necessary to address problems including a lack of employment benefits, income instability, job insecurity, and worker classification. The rights and welfare of gig workers must be protected, and this

can be done by ensuring fair labour laws, worker safeguards, and access to social safety nets. Policymakers, platforms, and stakeholders should work together to establish a climate that supports a balanced approach to the gig economy as Chhattisgarh's economy continues to change. Chhattisgarh may leverage the advantages of the gig economy while ensuring that gig workers are given fair treatment, proper assistance, and a sustainable route toward economic progress by acknowledging the contributions and resolving the concerns of gig workers. India has enormous potential for the growth of the freelance economy due to the sheer size of its population, which is made up of a workforce that spans multiple generations. According to Boston Consultancy Group (BCG) research published in March 2021, India's gig economy has the potential to support up to 90 million employees, or approximately 30% of all non-farm occupations, with the potential to add up to 1.25 per cent to India's GDP. The potential is huge, and platforms are also available, but the grass-roots work on implementable actionable steps is what we need to work on. For welfare programs for temporary labour to be implemented fairly, laws and the appropriate regulatory framework must be put in place.

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