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ADDRESSING LEGAL LACUNAS: STRENGTHING LABOUR RIGHTS TOWARDS GIG ECONOMY WORKERS

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ABSTRACT:

In today's digitally revolutionized world Gig Economy has occupied an influential standpoint. While the world is fast paced, the notion of gig economy helps the employment prospect to keep up with the speed of the dynamic globe. Traditional Labour Laws, lag behind in providing complete protection to the workers involved in the gig economy arrangement, since they are considered as independent contractors. Additionally, though the gig workers, also described as platform workers have been given a statutory recognition under the Code on Social Security 2020, nevertheless they fail to receive the benefits due to their categorization as independent contractors. This Paper seeks to advocate the Conceptual Understanding of the gig economic set up, outlining the challenges faced by the workers under the same, it further underscores the legislative initiatives adopted by the national as well as state legislature. Accordingly this paper attempts to analyze the role played by the judiciary in realizing the rights of gig workers. Lastly, this paper tries to draw a conclusion with respect to the current legal status of the workers employed under the gig economy set up as well as attempts to provide certain recommendations for the realization as well as execution of concrete rights for the benefits of these category of working class.

Key Words: Gig Economy, Employment, Platform workers, Independent contractors.

INTRODUCTION:

The rise of the gig economy has transformed conventional employment models, providing flexible job options while raising concerns about job stability and access to benefits. Individuals working as freelancers or independent contractors often encounter challenges such as unpredictable income, absence of health coverage, and limited career advancement. It's

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essential for companies to understand that the well-being of their workforce significantly influences productivity, motivation, and overall business success. This study examines how emphasizing the well-being of gig workers can boost organizational effectiveness, elevate worker morale, and foster a more resilient and enduring labor force. Supporting the needs of gig workers ultimately serves the interests of both the workers and the organizations that hire them³.

The swift advancement of digital technologies is driving a major economic shift, significantly influencing how jobs and employment evolve globally. ILO 2021 W.E.S.O Report highlights that digital labor platforms have increased fivefold over the past ten years. These platforms open up diverse skill-based opportunities for workers while enabling businesses to broaden their market access. As reported in the Survey 2020-21, India has become one of the leading global centers for gig and platform-based work an upward trend that is likely to continue with the growth of e-commerce. During 2020-21, around 7.7 million individuals were engaged in gig work, comprising 2.6% of India's non-agricultural labor force and 1.5% of the total workforce. Projections suggest that by 2029-30, the gig workforce will grow to 23.5 million, representing 6.7% of the non-agricultural sector and 4.1% of the nation's overall workforce. Work in the gig economy provides various appealing benefits that draw many individuals to these roles. Key attractions include the freedom to set one's own hours, the ability to take breaks when needed, and the option to choose clients or employers based on personal preferences. These perks have led to a rise in short-term and contract-based jobs, especially among those who value autonomy and flexibility in managing their professional and personal lives. Nevertheless, gig work also comes with notable drawbacks. The absence of stable employment, weak negotiating power, and the short-term nature of these roles raise serious concerns. Many gig workers contend with low pay, extended work hours, lack of paid sick leave, and minimal workplace protections. The unclear definition of their employment status leaves them exposed to potential mistreatment, often without sufficient legal support to resolve conflicts or issues. As the gig economy continues to grow rapidly, fueled by technological progress, it has disrupted conventional job models and sparked critical debates about the adequacy of current labor laws. The increasingly blurred line between independent contractors and formal employees has made it more challenging to enforce and interpret existing

³ Ms. Rovina Sharon Soans, Dr. Sheker Naik, "Workplace Well-being As a Catalyst For Organizational Growth: A Gig Economy Perspective" 5 Journal of Visual and Performing Arts, 1253 (2024).

employment regulations⁴.

The gig economy comprises a diverse group of independent individuals who engage in short-duration work assignments, commonly referred to as gigs. This form of employment includes roles such as freelancers, temporary staff, and ride-share drivers. It has gained significant popularity in recent years, primarily due to the greater flexibility it offers workers. Gig workers often called contingent workers are typically identified by three core traits. They enjoy a high level of autonomy, allowing them to select their projects, clients, and working hours. They have the freedom to set their own rates and manage their schedules. Instead of earning a consistent salary, these workers are compensated based on the tasks they complete or the goods or services they provide. Third, their work is based on short-term agreements or interactions, usually not exceeding one year, between service providers and consumers. Gig workers can be grouped into three main types: those offering services such as drivers or hairdressers, those involved in selling products like online marketplace vendors, and those renting out property or assets through platforms such as Airbnb⁵.

The rapidly expanding gig workforce is driving a global economic transformation, and India is emerging as a key player in this shift. With a massive labour force of over 500 million, a predominantly young population, increasing urbanization, and widespread use of smartphones and digital technology, India stands at the forefront of this evolving economic landscape. Platform workers operate via digital applications or online platforms, while non-platform gig workers typically include casual wage earners and self-employed individuals in traditional sectors, working on either a part-time or full-time basis. To distinguish gig workers from conventional ones, the study considers several factors such as urban residency, age group, educational background, income levels, as well as access to mobile phones and banking services⁶.

The world is now in the Fourth Industrial Revolution, where advanced technologies like robotics and AI are reshaping work with minimal human involvement. This digital

⁴ Saranya A.T, "Gig Workers And The Labour Laws: The Struggle Between Flexibility And Protection" 4 Indian Journal of Integrated Research in Law 703 (2024).

⁵ Nikhil Pande, "What Are The Economic Implications Of The Rise Of The Gig Economy On Employment Stability And Benefits?" 26 IOSR Journal of Business and Management 1 (2024).

⁶ India's Booming Gig and Platform Economy, Available at: https://www.niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2023-06/Policy_Brief_India%27s_Booming_Gig_and_Platform_Economy_27062022.pdf (Last visited on September 8, 2025).

transformation is changing how people and institutions interact, offering new solutions and job opportunities, while also posing risks like technological unemployment and reduced income stability. As automation redefines job roles and eliminates some, it also creates demand for new skills and occupations. This shift has made continuous, flexible learning essential and contributed to the rise of the gig economy, where individuals work independently outside the traditional 9-to-5 model⁷. The gig economy, driven by digital platforms and flexible work models, is reshaping employment worldwide, including in India. As traditional job opportunities decline and youth unemployment rises, more people especially the younger generation are turning to gig work for income. Gig workers enjoy flexibility and independence, often working multiple jobs, though they face insecurity and lack of protections. In India, gig work isn't new, with roots in the informal sector⁸.

GIG ECONOMY IN INDIA: CONCEPTUAL PERSPECTIVE

The term *gig economy* refers to a labor market characterized by short term, flexible and task based work arrangements that are typically mediated through digital platforms or contractual agreements. Unlike traditional employment, where workers are bound by long term employer employee relationships, the gig economy operates on the principle of independent contracting, freelancing or on demand service provision.

The expression “gig” originates from the entertainment industry, where artists were hired for specific performances. Over time, this concept extended to other sectors, especially with the rise of digital platforms that connect service providers with consumers⁹. Under this system, workers are usually remunerated on the basis of task, rides or delivery, rather than through fixed salaries.

Work in the gig economy provides a number of advantages that draw people toward such jobs. It allows individuals to design their own schedules, take breaks when necessary and select employers according to personal preferences. This autonomy has encourage the rise of short term and contractual engagements, particularly those who value independence and a flexible

⁷ Dr. Vijeta Banwari, "Gig Economy: Challenges and Opportunities in India" 5 Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research 413 (2018).

⁸ Dr. Gaurav, Rahul Sharma, "The Rise of Gig and Platform Workers in India: An Approach Towards Formalizing the Informal Workforce" 6 International Journal of Law Management & Humanities 3873 - 3875 (2023).

⁹ Juliet B. Schor, *After the Gig: How the Sharing Economy Got Hijacked and How to win It Back* (California , University of California Press, 2020).

balance between work and personal life.

At the same time, this form of employment carries notable drawbacks. The absence of stable job security, limited ability to negotiate and the temporary nature of such works raises serious concerns. Gig Workers frequently encounter low pay, extended working hours, lack of paid sick leave and insufficient occupational safeguards. In addition, their uncertain legal status often leaves them exposed to exploitation with minimal remedies for grievances or disputes. With the rapid expansion of gig economy and continuous technological innovation, traditional employment frameworks are being reshaped. This shift has intensified debates within labor law, especially as the boundary between independent contractors and employees becomes increasingly blurred, making the enforcement of existing protections more complex¹⁰.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: COMPREHENDING THE ORIGINATION OF THIS CONTEMPORARY EMPLOYMENT SET UP

The gig economy is often described as a modern innovation, yet its origins can be traced to much earlier developments in patterns of labor and economic exchange. In pre-industrial societies, most work was seasonal, task-oriented and heavily dependent on agricultural cycles. Craftsmen, traders and itinerant workers often relied on temporary tasks and short-term contracts, which share similarities with the contemporary gig model.

Furthermore, with the advent of the Industrial Revolution, the emphasis shifted towards long-term, structured employment in factories, which became the dominant mode of labor. However, “casual labor” persisted in industries such as mining, transport and service work, functioning as a precursor to today’s flexible workforce. During the Great Depression of the 1930s, millions of workers were forced into ad hoc jobs, highlighting the economic vulnerability that accompanies irregular employment¹¹. This oscillation between stable, contract-based work and precarious, short-term work illustrates that the gig economy is better understood as a part of a long trajectory of labor flexibilization rather than a sudden disruption.

The 20th century witnessed gradual transitions that further shaped the gig model. The decline

¹⁰ A.T. Saranya, Gig workers and The Labor Laws: The Struggle between Flexibility and protection, 4, *Indian Journal of Integrated Research in Law*, 703 (2022).

¹¹ Arne L. Kalleberg and Michael Dunn, “Good Jobs, Bad Jobs in the Gig Economy”, 20, *Perspective on Work* 10-14(2016).

of manufacturing and the rise of the service sector in the 1970s-1990s led businesses to increasingly outsource tasks and hire freelancers to cut operational costs. This shift was reinforced by globalization and neoliberal economic policies that emphasized labor market deregulation. It was during this period that the music industry—originally used in the 1920s jazz scene to describe short-term musical performances, by the 1940s the term was widely used in musicians unions, and later extended to describe temporary work across sectors. This marked the cultural and linguistic embedding of “gig” into the labor lexicon.

The digital revolution in the late 20th and early 21st centuries provided the technological infrastructure necessary for the large scale expansion of the gig economy. Online platforms such as Freelancers.com and upwork emerged in the early 2000s, connecting independent workers with employers around the globe. The global financial crisis of 2007-2008 acted as a major catalyst, as shrinking formal job markets pushed individuals towards alternative income sources, while companies sought to minimize labor costs by shifting towards flexible, on-demand workers.

The 2010s marked the consolidation of what is usually defined as “Platform Economy”, in which mobile applications facilitated real-time matching of labor with consumer demand. Companies such as Uber (2009), Airbnb (2008), TaskRabbit (2008), Ola, swiggy and Zomato epitomized this transition¹².

CHALLENGES: THE INFLUENTIAL DRIVERS TOWARDS THE ADVANCEMENT OF GIG ECONOMY

The gig economy in India encounters several significant challenges, including:

- I. Lack of Employment Stability:** Gig workers often operate without the assurance of long-term employment, as they are typically hired on a task-by-task basis. This precarious arrangement creates financial unpredictability and complicates long-term personal and professional planning.
- II. Informal Work Environment:** A large portion of gig workers remain part of the unorganized sector, which limits their access to essential services such as institutional credit, government welfare schemes, and formal economic protections.

¹² Dr. Gaurav and Rahul Sharma, The Rise of Gig Platform workers in India : An Approach towards formalizing the Informal Workforce, 6, *International Journal of Law Management and Humanities*, 3873 (2024).

- III. Lack of Legal Safeguards and Social Benefits:** India's existing labor laws often do not extend to gig and platform-based workers. As a result, these workers face potential exploitation, workplace discrimination, or sudden job loss, while also lacking basic welfare benefits like medical coverage, pensions, or paid time off.
- IV. Wage Disputes and Payment Delays:** Delayed payments or non-payment for completed tasks are common concerns. To address this, there is a growing need for robust policy measures that ensure timely remuneration and provide effective grievance redressal mechanisms.
- V. Weak Negotiation Leverage:** Being classified as independent contractors, gig workers lack collective representation. This puts them in a weak position when it comes to negotiating fair wages or terms with platforms. Typically, payment structures and conditions are dictated by the employer, leaving workers with little to no influence.
- VI. Occupational Health Risks:** Workers in roles such as delivery personnel or drivers are frequently exposed to unsafe environments. They often travel long distances on two-wheelers, sometimes ignoring safety protocols to meet performance-based targets. These high-pressure conditions can cause long-term physical health problems and increase accident risk.¹³

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK:

- I. Constitutional Basis:** Article¹⁴ prohibits forced labour, and the Supreme Court in the case¹⁵ interpreted this to include work accepted under economic compulsion. The Court emphasized that even private employers can be held accountable if workers are forced into poor conditions due to poverty or fear of starvation. In the case¹⁶, the Court highlighted the importance of ensuring worker participation and dignity, aligning with DPSP, especially Articles¹⁷, which urge the state to create humane labour conditions and ensure basic needs. However, despite growing reliance on gig and platform workers, especially women in the digital economy, the state has often failed to legally recognize their employment rights. This undermines

¹³ Tejaswini Sugumaran, Abirami Vishwanathan, "An Analysis of Gig Workers and the Challenges Surrounding Their Employment" 5 *International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research (IJFMR)* 3-4 (2023).

¹⁴ The Constitution of India, art 23.

¹⁵ *People's Union for Democratic Rights v. Union of India*, (1982) 3 SCC 235.

¹⁶ *National Textile Workers' Union v. P.R. Ramakrishnan*, (1983) 1 SCC 228.

¹⁷ The Constitution of India, arts. 39, 42, 43.

both constitutional protections and international obligations. Simply enforcing minimum wages is not enough these workers deserve legal guarantees for decent work, social security, and a stable livelihood¹⁸.

II. Code of Social Security, 2020¹⁹: The Central Government, using its authority from the Concurrent List of the Constitution, introduced four labour codes, including this law²⁰, which is the first to officially recognize gig and platform workers. It classifies aggregators as distinct employers and requires these workers to register for social security benefits—though only those aged between 16 and 60 are eligible. The Code also calls for helplines and support centres for their welfare. It establishes six key social security bodies, including the NSSBGP and the ESIC, which specifically cover gig workers. The government can launch schemes similar to the existing ESI model for health, maternity, disability, and death benefits, funded jointly by gig workers and aggregators, with tax relief for aggregator contributions. The NSSBGP will design, implement, and supervise these welfare schemes, with funding drawn from the SSF, supported by governments, aggregators, workers, and CSR funds. Aggregators must contribute 1–2% of their annual turnover, capped at 5% of total payouts to gig workers²¹.

III. Rajasthan Platform Based Gig Workers (Registration and Welfare) Act, 2023²²: Alongside the Social Security Code, Rajasthan became the first Indian state to legislate protections for gig workers through the Rajasthan Platform-Based Gig Workers (Registration and Welfare) Act, 2023²³, passed on July 24, 2023. This law aims to provide social security and welfare benefits to platform-based gig workers. It establishes the Rajasthan Gig Workers Welfare Board, tasked with registering workers, supervising welfare schemes, advising the government, ensuring access to benefits, protecting worker rights, and resolving grievances. The Act also sets up a Welfare Fund, financed through state grants, welfare fees, and other sources, to support these initiatives. A dedicated grievance redressal system is included,

¹⁸ Dr. Gaurav, Rahul Sharma, "The Rise of Gig and Platform Workers in India: An Approach Towards Formalizing the Informal Workforce" 6 International Journal of Law Management & Humanities 3880 - 3881 (2023).

¹⁹ The Code on Social Security, 2020 (Act 36 of 2020).

²⁰ The Code on Social Security, 2020 (Act 36 of 2020).

²¹ Saranya A.T, "Gig Workers And The Labour Laws: The Struggle Between Flexibility And Protection" 4 Indian Journal of Integrated Research in Law 705 - 708 (2024).

²² The Rajasthan Platform Based Gig Workers (Registration and Welfare) Act, 2023, (Act 29 of 2023).

²³ The Rajasthan Platform Based Gig Workers (Registration and Welfare) Act, 2023, (Act 29 of 2023).

enabling workers to file complaints with a state-appointed officer or via an online portal for issues like delayed payments or denied benefits.

- IV. Karnataka Platform-based Gig Workers (Social Security and Welfare) Bill, 2024:** Building on Rajasthan's model, the Karnataka government released a draft Bill. The Karnataka Platform-based Gig Workers (Social Security and Welfare) Bill, 2024 on June 26, 2024, to safeguard gig workers' rights through social security measures. The Bill proposes forming the Karnataka Gig Workers Welfare Board to manage the registration of both gig workers and aggregators and oversee the rollout of state-mandated welfare schemes. Provisions include: Mandatory 14-day notice for contract changes or terminations, with written justification. Weekly payment requirement for gig workers. Compliance with safety and health regulations set for different sectors. Creation of a Social Security and Welfare Fund supported by gig worker contributions, aggregator fees, and government aid. Introduction of a CTIMS to digitally track all platform payments and monitor welfare fee deposits, managed by the state and supervised by the Board²⁴.
- V. The Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act, 2008²⁵:** The Indian government took an important initiative by introducing this law to provide social security to workers beyond the formal employment sector, especially those in the unorganised workforce, a category that largely intersects with gig and platform workers. However, since the gig economy was still in its early stages at the time, the Act did not explicitly acknowledge gig workers as a distinct group.

JUDICIAL APPROACH TOWARDS THE RIGHTS AND PROTECTION OF GIG WORKERS:

- I. Dharangadhara Chemical Works v. State of Saurashtra (1957)²⁶:** Introduced "control and supervision" as key factors to determine employment status. A foundational test for distinguishing employees from independent contractors, influencing gig worker cases.

²⁴ Saranya A.T, "Gig Workers And The Labour Laws: The Struggle Between Flexibility And Protection" 4 Indian Journal of Integrated Research in Law 705 - 708 (2024).

²⁵ The Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act, 2008 (Act 33 of 2008).

²⁶ *Dharangadhara Chemical Works Ltd. v. State of Saurashtra*, AIR 1957 SC 264

- II. **Balwant Rai Saluja v. Air India (2004)**²⁷: Reinforced that economic dependence and control determine employment status, regardless of contract terms. Important precedent used to assess gig worker classification.
- III. **Kavita v. Uber India (Mumbai Consumer Disputes Commission, 2020)**²⁸: Uber held liable for negligence of its driver causing loss to the customer. Established that ride-hailing platforms can be held responsible for service deficiencies, not just intermediaries.
- IV. **IFAT v. Union of India (2021 - ongoing)**: Pending Supreme Court decision. The petition seeks formal recognition of gig workers under the Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act, 2008, demanding social security benefits. The case is pivotal for defining gig worker rights in India. IFAT filed a PIL in the Supreme Court advocating for gig workers' right to social security. They argued that workers on platforms like Zomato, Swiggy, Ola, and Uber should be recognized as unorganized workers and granted labor law benefits. The petition highlighted gig workers' exploitation through long hours, low pay, and absence of social protections, urging the creation of health insurance, maternity leave, pensions, and other support schemes. It also challenged the notion that gig workers are partners, insisting their relationship with platforms is effectively employer-employee²⁹.
- V. **All India Gig Workers Union v. Uber India Systems Pvt. Ltd.**: Gig workers challenged Uber's refusal to offer minimum wages and social security, underscoring their ongoing fight for fundamental labor rights³⁰.

CONCLUSION:

India's rising population and persistent unemployment, especially among unskilled workers, expose the vulnerabilities of gig workers using digital platforms. As technology evolves and customer behavior shifts, there is an urgent need to redefine gig work and implement regulations that protect these workers. The gig economy remains one of the most at-risk sectors due to vague laws and exploitative practices by companies. To address this, a new legal

²⁷ *Balwant Rai Saluja & Anr. v. Air India Ltd. & Ors.*, (2014) 9 SCC 407

²⁸ *Kavita S. Sharma v. Uber India Systems Pvt. Ltd.* (CC/21/61).

²⁹ Naveen Kumar, "Regulatory Framework and the Protection of Basic Rights of Gig Workers" Bar and Bench, Available at: <https://www.barandbench.com/law-firms/view-point/regulatory-framework-and-the-protection-of-basic-rights-of-gig-workers>. (Last visited on September 8, 2025).

³⁰ Manpreet Singh, "India's Gig economy: A Legal Minefield", Manupatra, Available at: <https://articles.manupatra.com/article-details/India-s-Gig-Economy-A-Legal-Minefield>. (Last visited on September 8, 2025).

category "dependent contractors" has been proposed, bridging the gap between employees and freelancers. Immediate reforms could include mandatory dispute resolution clauses in contracts to prevent arbitrary dismissals and ensure fair negotiation. While recent social security reforms are a positive step, they fall short of fully protecting gig workers. India must revise its legal framework to close loopholes, redefine the term "employer" to include those responsible for workers' welfare, and place regulatory checks on service platforms. Measures like banning sudden dismissals, mandating ADR, and establishing a regulatory commission can ensure comprehensive rights and protections for gig workers. Workplace well-being is crucial for the growth of the gig economy. Companies that ensure fair pay, healthcare, work-life balance, and career development see better productivity and retention. Though some firms have started such initiatives, more robust efforts are needed to build a stable gig workforce. As India's gig sector expands rapidly, prioritizing worker welfare is both a strategic and moral imperative. To make gig work secure yet flexible, collaboration between policymakers, businesses, and society is essential. With stronger protections and fair practices, India can lead globally in shaping a sustainable and worker-friendly gig economy.

SUGGESTIONS:

- I. CATALYSING PLATFORMIZATION:** A "Platform India" initiative, similar to the successful Startup India program, could be launched focusing on streamlining platform access, providing financial aid, offering skill training, and promoting social and financial inclusion. Passenger transport services could be allowed across all vehicle types from two-wheelers (like bike taxis) to auto-rickshaws, cars, and mini-buses. Self-employed vendors selling local or street food could be connected to digital platforms to expand their reach into urban markets.
- II. ACCELERATING ACCESS TO FINANCE FOR PLATFORM WORKERS:** Institutional credit access can be improved through financial products tailored for platform workers and aspiring platform entrepreneurs. Support like venture capital, bank loans, and grants should be made available to platform businesses at early growth stages. Instead of collateral-based loans, cash flow-based financing through FinTech solutions can better serve those new to credit. Unsecured loans for first-time borrowers in the platform economy should be included under Priority Sector Lending. Special focus should be given to ensuring formal credit access for women, persons with disabilities, and startups from smaller towns and rural areas.

- III. SKILL DEVELOPMENT FOR PLATFORM JOBS:** Platform-driven models for skill development and job generation should be encouraged in the gig economy. Collaborations between platforms, the Ministry of Skill Development, and NSDC can help train workers and promote micro-entrepreneurship. Upskilling those in informal sectors like construction or driving can open doors for better roles within the gig ecosystem, increasing their income and career mobility. Platforms can also issue “Skill Certificates” or “Skill Passports” — digital badges on worker profiles — to showcase their expertise and support career growth. These efforts should be integrated into India’s National Skill Development Policy and future skilling strategies.
- IV. ENHANCING SOCIAL INCLUSION IN THE NEW-AGE DIGITAL ECONOMY:** Platform businesses can collaborate with CSOs to support women and PwDs by offering skills training, financial access, and necessary resources to help them enter the platform workforce. CSOs can also raise awareness about the legal, economic, and social rights of these groups. To create a more inclusive environment, platforms should adapt job designs and workplace infrastructure to meet the needs of women and PwDs. They should promote inclusive communication strategies, increase representation of women and PwDs in leadership roles, and avoid reinforcing stereotypes. Support systems like 24/7 helplines should also be in place. Platforms led by women or those promoting the hiring of women and PwDs should receive special incentives.
- V. EXTENDING SOCIAL SECURITY FOR GIG & PLATFORM WORKERS IN INDIA:** Platform businesses should adopt year-round policies ensuring paid sick leave, healthcare access, and insurance for all workers, building on the support measures introduced during the Covid-19 pandemic. These steps would significantly strengthen social security for gig workers. Inspired by Indonesia’s model, Indian platforms in sectors like ride-hailing, delivery, and e-commerce could offer digital accident insurance, either independently or in partnership with private firms or the government, in line with the Code on Social Security, 2020.
- VI. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE ESTIMATIONS OF PLATFORM WORKERS:** A dedicated survey should be conducted to accurately assess the size and nature of the gig economy and profile gig workers. Regular data collection efforts like the Census, PLFS, or NSS should include details on multiple jobs held by individuals and whether they are involved in gig work. These surveys should

also gather specific information—such as type of work contracts and use of digital platforms—to clearly identify gig workers.

VII. THE FUTURE OF PLATFORM ECONOMY: A RESEARCH AGENDA:

Small platform businesses face different challenges than larger ones, so it's crucial to examine their specific needs and operational issues. More data is also required to understand the struggles of women-led platforms, which can inform targeted support and scaling strategies. While platforms are known for job creation, further research is needed to assess whether technology use is contributing to employment formalization. Additionally, estimating the gig and platform economy's contribution to India's GDP will help track the rate of platform adoption across sectors and identify the key drivers and obstacles to its growth.³¹



³¹ India's Booming Gig and Platform Economy, Available at: https://www.niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2023-06/Policy_Brief_India%27s_Booming_Gig_and_Platform_Economy_27062022.pdf (Last visited on September 8, 2025).