



A STUDY ON GRADUATE AND POST GRADUATES AS A PART OF GIG ECONOMY

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Abstract:

The gig economy has emerged as a significant employment sector, offering flexible work opportunities across various industries. This study examines the role of graduates and postgraduates in the gig economy. Analysing their participation, challenges and opportunities. With the rise of digital platforms and changing workforce dynamics, educated professionals are increasingly engaging in freelancing, contract-based and remote work. The research explores factors influencing their transition to gig work such as skill adaptability, job security and concerns and financial sustainability. Additionally, it assesses the implications of this trend on traditional employment structures and policy frameworks.

This study provides insights for policymakers, educators and industry leaders to optimize the integration of graduates and postgraduates into the evolving labour market. This research paper seeks to examine the role of graduates and postgraduates in the gig economy by exploring their motivations, challenges, and the broader economic and policy implications. By analysing key trends, employment patterns, and the skill demands of gig-based work, this study aims to provide insights into how higher education interacts with the gig economy. Furthermore, the research will assess whether the current educational framework adequately prepares graduates for this emerging work model and explore potential strategies for enhancing their career prospects within this dynamic employment sector.

Keywords: Graduates, Post- Graduates, students, Gig economy, Role.

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Introduction:

The global labour market is experiencing a paradigm shift with the rapid expansion of the gig economy, a system characterized by short-term contracts, freelance work, and platform-based employment. The gig economy has become a critical component of modern labour market offering young people unique opportunities for income generation and skill development. As per situation challenging to create jobs for youth, there is immense employment potential in Gig workers. The traditional model of long-term, stable employment is increasingly being supplemented or, in some cases, replaced by more flexible work arrangements that prioritize autonomy and task-based compensation. This transformation is largely driven by

advancements in digital technology, globalization, and changing workforce preferences. While the gig economy offers numerous opportunities for both workers and businesses, it also presents challenges related to job security, income stability, and access to social protection.

In this evolving employment landscape, graduates and postgraduates represent a unique segment of the workforce. Armed with formal education, specialized skills, and professional aspirations, they are both contributors and beneficiaries of the gig economy. Many graduates and postgraduates turn to gig work as a means of gaining industry experience, supplementing income, or even as a primary career choice due to its flexibility and accessibility. Gig work provides

flexibility of work to students giving them opportunity to manage their time according to their preferences. It provides wide industrial exposure through which they can develop their skills and increase their networks. Gig work motivates entrepreneurial attitude of the students. However, the implications of gig work for this highly educated workforce remain complex and multifaceted. Questions arise regarding the alignment of their academic qualifications with gig-based opportunities, the sustainability of gig work as a long-term career path, and the socio-economic consequences of their participation in a largely unregulated labour market.

Review of Literature:
Lauren Andriaansen (Dec, 2023)

The study analysis the employment experience of students pursuing degree. It takes into consideration the participation of students in gig work and their enthusiasm towards gig work. It states that the large portion of students days are taken up by homework and work and are commonly working multiple jobs. The study quotes that students ability to work largely depends on the type of employment they are in referring to full time job, part time job, internship. It also states that major participation of students in gig work was due to its potential of earning side income.

N. Vanaja (Aug 8, 2023)

In the research paper published by the journal named International Journal of creative research thoughts (IJCRT) the author studies the inclination of students towards the gig career where the selected sample collected is from students of Chikka Muniyappa Reddy's Institute of Technology (CMIRT). The motive of the research was to study the concept of Gig Economy broadly and derive the interpretation of involvement of the CMRIT youth in Gig work. The study concludes that the concept of Gig Economy is wide and can be beneficial to the students while to its

contradiction the awareness amongst the students about the optimistic approach of Gig work is less and the inclination of students towards gig work is less.

Chandrashekhar R (Dec, 2024)

This study analyses the gig economy's potential in creating employment opportunities in India, emphasizing the need for policies that address job security and benefits for gig workers, including those with advanced degrees. It identifies that Gig economy played a significant role in employment generation by providing flexible working opportunities to people. It allowed people to manage their time and participate in short term project works and earn extra income by utilizing their optimum potential. The research states that Gig economy contributes largely towards the overall economic growth of the country but the policy makers need take into consideration its complexities and modify respective provisions accordingly.

Objectives:

- To study the involvement of graduate and post graduates as a part of gig economy
- To understand and state the key points through the study

Research Methodology:

This study follows a descriptive and analytical research methodology aimed at understanding the role of graduates and postgraduates in the gig economy. The research investigates their participation, reasons for engagement, financial perceptions, and perceived benefits as students. This study is conducted by using primary as well as secondary data.

Data Collection:

Secondary data sources: articles, journals and books.

Primary data source: Data collected is through survey method where the data is collected from 50 respondents being graduates and postgraduates. Participants were selected based on accessibility, primarily from an academic environment.

Stream	Graduate	Post Graduate	Pursuing Graduation	Pursuing Post Graduation	Grand Total
Arts	2		2		4
Commerce	5	1	1	21	28
Science	4	2	11	1	18
Grand Total	11	3	14	22	50

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETAION:

Table 1.2 Gig Economy Participation by Qualification

Row Labels	Graduate	Post Graduate	Pursuing Graduation	Pursuing Post Graduation	Grand Total
No	8	2	8	16	34
Yes	3	1	6	6	16
Grand Total	11	3	14	22	50

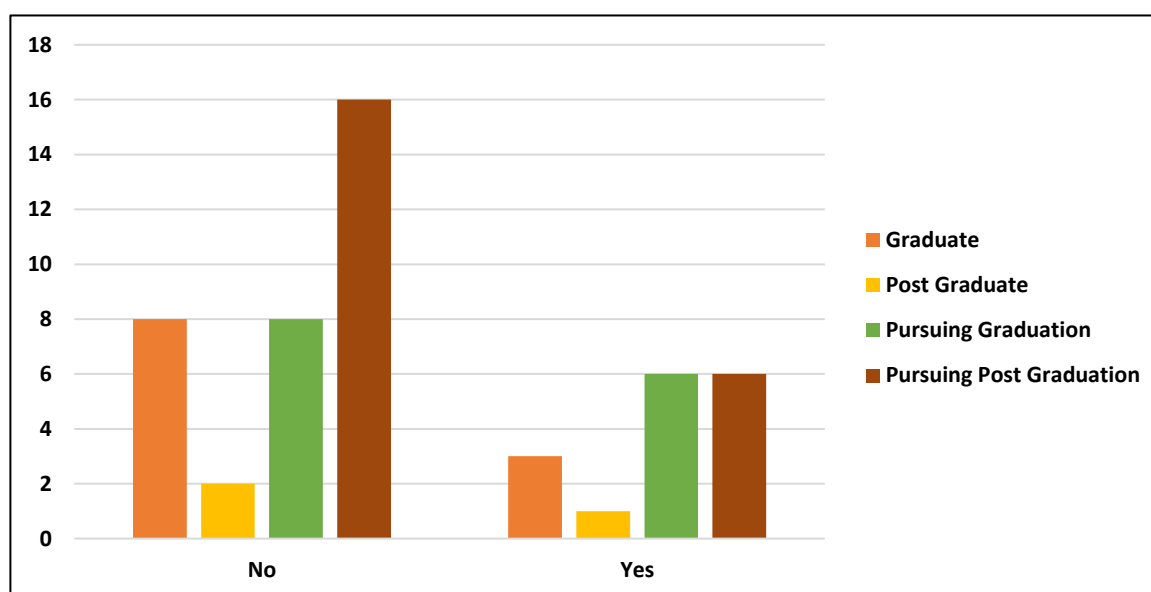


Figure 1 (Visual Representation of Table 1.2)

Interpretation:

In this Figure from above table, it is evident that 34 out of 50 respondents are not engaged in the gig economy. Where it is also visible that students pursuing post-graduation and students pursuing graduation are equally and moderately involved which amounts to 12 students in total of the sample collected. The column chart highlights that while gig work participation is relatively lower among postgraduates, those pursuing their education are more engaged, indicating that gig work is seen as a temporary or supplementary employment option rather than a full-time career.

Work type	Graduate	Post Graduate	Pursuing Graduation	Pursuing Post Graduation	Grand Total
Advertising	1				1
Coding		1			1
Food delivery		1			1
Freelancing	3		1	2	6
In company				1	1
None	5	1	8	15	29
Pharmacy			1		1
Shop	1				1
Teaching (hourly basis)	1		4	4	9
Grand Total	11	3	14	22	50

Table 1.3 Types of Gig work performed

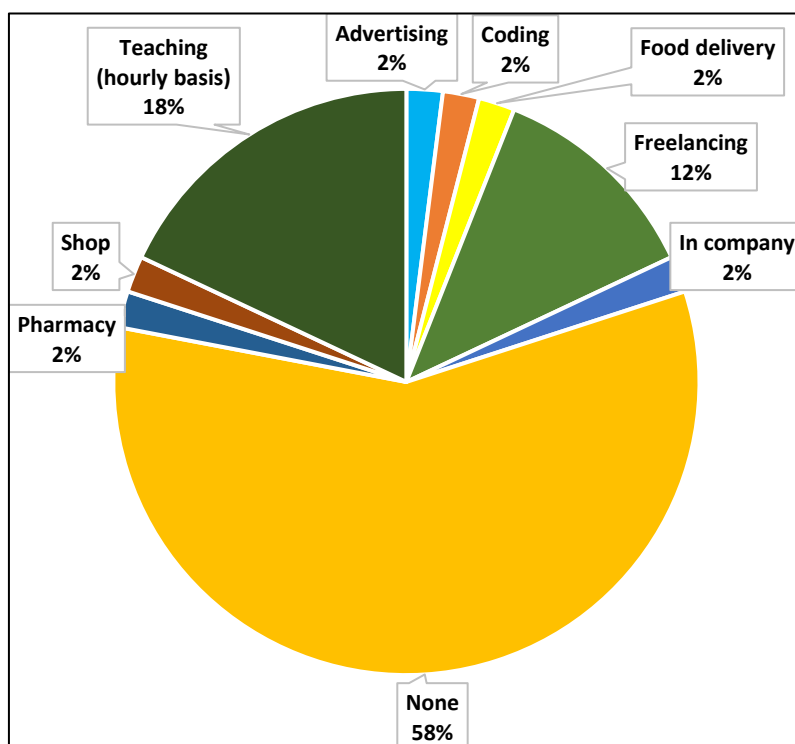


Figure 2: Types of Gig work performed

Interpretation: Teaching (hourly basis) is the most popular gig job (9 respondents). Freelancing (Excel projects work, etc.) follows with 6 respondents. Other roles, including advertising, food delivery, and pharmacy jobs have limited participation.

The chart highlights that the dominance of teaching, advertising and freelancing suggests that educated individuals prefer skill-based gig jobs over manual work. The low number of participations in delivery and company-based roles indicates that higher-educated individuals might avoid physically demanding gig jobs.

Reason	Graduate	Post Graduate	Pursuing Graduation	Pursuing Post Graduation	Grand Total
Additional income	3	1	4	1	9
Flexibility	1		3	4	8
Lack of full time jobs	2				2
None	3		2	6	11
Skill Development	2	2	5	11	20
Grand Total	11	3	14	22	50

Table 1.4 Reason for choosing gig Work

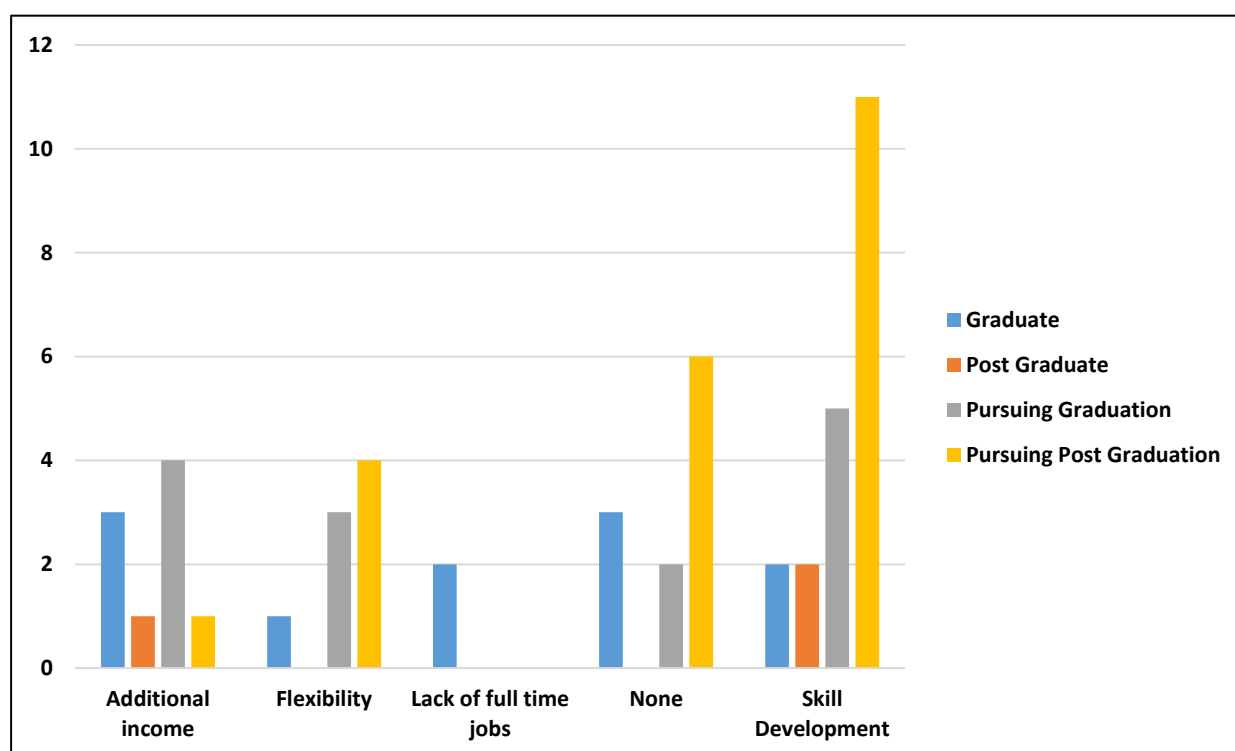


Figure 3 (Visual representation of Table 1.4)

Interpretation:

Skill Development (20 respondents) is the top reason for engaging in gig work. Additional income (9 respondents) and flexibility (8 respondents) are other key motivators. Only 2 respondents cited lack of full-time jobs as a reason. The fact that only 2 respondents joined due to a lack of full-time jobs suggests that gig work is often a choice rather than a necessity. Students choose skill development over just earning of side income giving positive response of 20 to the section. This also shows the growth motive of the young generation.

Answers	Graduate	Post Graduate	Pursuing Graduation	Pursuing Post Graduation	Grand Total
Maybe	5	1	6	9	21
No	3	1	2	2	8
Yes	3	1	6	11	21
Grand Total	11	3	14	22	50

Table 1.5: Perception of Gig Work's Financial Viability

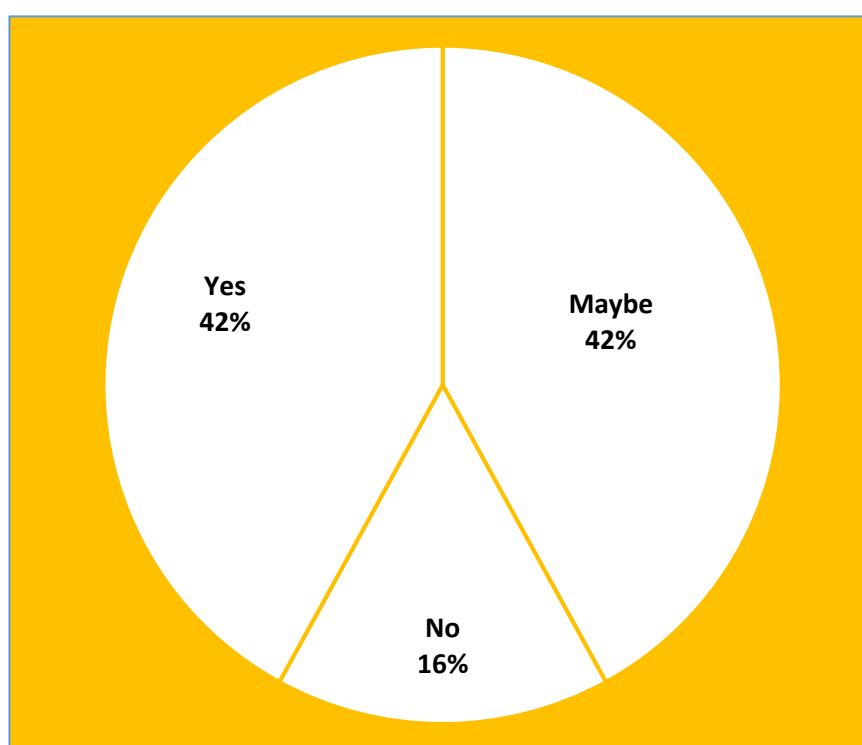


Figure 4 (Visual Representation of Table 1.5)

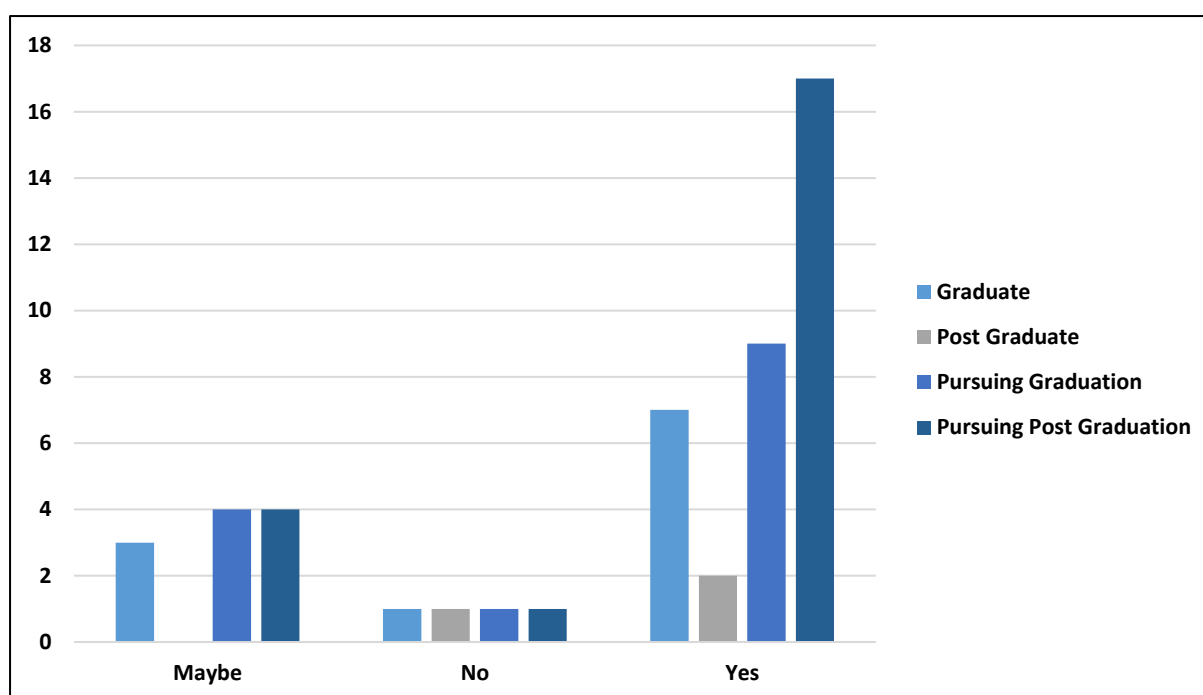
Interpretation:

A closer look at the data reveals that a significant portion of respondents are uncertain about whether gig work offers better financial prospects than traditional jobs.

The pie chart illustrates that pursuing postgraduates have the highest positive perception of gig work's financial viability, with 21 respondents agreeing that gig work offers better financial opportunities. However, a large number of respondents remain uncertain, highlighting the need for further investigation into job stability, earnings consistency, and long-term career prospects in gig work. And some respondents disagree with the fact of better financial opportunities of gig work over traditional jobs which is 8 respondents.

Table 1.6: Perceived Benefits of Gig Economy for Students

Answers	Graduate	Post Graduate	Pursuing Graduation	Pursuing Post Graduation	Grand Total
Maybe	3		4	4	11
No	1	1	1	1	4
Yes	7	2	9	17	35
Grand Total	11	3	4	22	50


Figure 5 (Visual representation of Table 1.6)
Interpretation:

The table shows that a majority of respondents (35 out of 50) believe that the gig economy provides beneficial opportunities for students. Pursuing postgraduates demonstrate the highest level of agreement (17 responses), possibly due to their need for work experience, financial independence, or exposure to industry-specific skills. The bar chart illustrates that the high positive response suggests that students see gig work as valuable for gaining experience and income. The uncertainty (11 respondents) may stem from concerns about job security, inconsistent pay, or lack of awareness. The low disagreement (4 respondents) indicates that most students see less value in gig work.

Findings:

The finding highlights the growing dependence on gig work as a career alternative, emphasizing the need for

enhanced digital skills, financial literacy and regulatory support. An important aspect of this study is understanding how various educational backgrounds

impact gig work participation. Focus on graduates and postgraduates' roles, motivations, and financial perceptions in the gig economy. It is evident that the majority of respondents are not engaged in the gig economy. Many students and graduates enter the gig economy due to financial constraints or skill development needs.

Gig work participation is relatively lower among students who have completed their graduation and postgraduation. The students which are pursuing their education are more engaged in gig work, indicating that gig work is seen as a supplementary employment option rather than a full-time career. Freelancing is the most popular gig job. Other roles, including advertising, food delivery, and pharmacy jobs have limited participation. The low number of participations in delivery and company-based roles indicates that higher-educated individuals might avoid physically demanding gig jobs.

Freelancing are the most preferred jobs among educated individuals. The analysis of point of view of students for reason of gig work suggests that students see gig work as valuable for gaining experience and income. Additional income is the main driver for choosing gig work in comparison to skill development. A majority number of respondents remain uncertain, highlighting the need for further investigation into job stability. Most students find gig work beneficial, but some remain unsure about its long-term career prospects.

Suggestions:

Institutions and government bodies should conduct workshops and training programs to educate students about gig opportunities, taxation and financial planning. Universities should incorporate gig-based internships and freelancing projects into their academic framework. This would allow students to gain practical exposure while still completing their education. Students who engage in gig work often develop

entrepreneurial skills. College and incubation centres should provide mentorship and funding opportunities to help gig workers transition into full-time entrepreneurs.

Since many respondents are uncertain about the financial benefits of gig work compared to traditional jobs and financial security, policymakers should consider implementing social security benefits such as health insurance and retirement plans for gig workers, ensuring they have long-term financial stability.

By implementing these suggestions, the gig economy can become a more sustainable and beneficial employment model for graduates and postgraduates, fostering career growth, financial security and skill development.

Conclusion:

Gig Economy being a concept which is fresh to the students it is not understood extensively by them. There seems to be less or moderate awareness about gig work among graduate and post graduate students. Participation of policymakers can make them aware about the pros and cons of the Gig work. Media can play a crucial role for such advancement. This study provides insights into how graduates and postgraduates participate in the gig economy and their perceptions of its financial viability and benefits. The findings indicate that while a significant portion of graduates and postgraduates are part of the gig economy. Those who engage in it find it beneficial, especially in term of skill development and financial support. However, financial perceptions remain mixed, suggesting that while gig work provides opportunities. It may not yet be seen as a full-fledged alternative to traditional employment.

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- QUESTIONNAIRE**
1. *Are you a part of gig economy?*
 2. *If yes, what type of gig work do you do?*
 3. *Why did you choose to work as gig worker?*
 4. *Do you think gig work provides better financial opportunities compared to traditional jobs?*
 5. *Do you think as a student you are benefited by the work opportunities created by Gig Economy?*

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