



AN EXPLORATORY RESEARCH ON ENHANCING AWARENESS OF E- SHRAM APPLICATION FOR GIG WORKERS

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Abstract :

The rapid growth of the gig economy in India has led to an increase in the number of workers engaged in freelance and platform-based employment. However, these gig workers often lack access to formal social security systems. In response, the Government of India introduced the E-Shram application to register unorganized sector workers and extend welfare benefits to them. Despite its objectives, the awareness and adoption of the E-Shram platform among gig workers remain limited. This exploratory research employed a survey-based methodology, targeting gig workers across India to assess their level of awareness regarding the E-Shram application. The findings indicate that a substantial percentage of gig workers are unaware of the platform, with key barriers including low digital literacy, inadequate dissemination of information, and procedural difficulties. The study recommends the implementation of targeted awareness campaigns, simplification of the registration process, and strategic partnerships with gig economy platforms to increase accessibility and engagement. These measures are essential to bridge the awareness gap and ensure that gig workers receive the social security benefits provided by the E-Shram initiative. Future research should explore the long-term impact of E-Shram and how policy changes can further improve worker protection.

Keywords: Gig economy-Shram, Digital Literacy ,Awareness,Unorganised workers.

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Introduction:

GIG Workers:

The gig economy refers to a system where businesses hire independent workers for short-term, temporary tasks or assignments instead of offering permanent positions. Often referred to as the "Fourth Industrial Revolution," this model allows workers to offer their skills to multiple companies while businesses seek specific skills for particular projects. In the gig economy, temporary contracts are often preferred over permanent ones, signalling a shift away from traditional employment structures. Conventional hiring methods and strategies no longer apply to this evolving freelance workforce. The gig economy can be divided into two main categories: the digital gig economy and the physical gig economy. The digital gig economy encompasses online labor such as freelancing, crowd

work, and microtasks, while the physical gig economy includes on-demand work facilitated through mobile apps. As technology advances, there is a significant shift in the workforce, workplaces, and working systems, transforming the economy. Flexibility has become the new guiding principle in work, and the Internet of Things (IoT) is further reshaping the nature of work. This has led to a clear distinction between traditional and non-traditional employment sectors (Agrawal & Bhukya, 2022). Over the past two years, the number of workers hired as freelancers or contract employees has grown from 20% to 25% within the contingent workforce (Correspondent, S., 2021). The trend of Uberisation has even made its way to India, where the current generation is more focused on flexibility, self-growth, and being in control of their time and career. Gig workers have the advantage of

accessing a broader range of potential clients and customers, which increases their opportunities for work. Moreover, they often earn higher wages than traditional employees, as they are able to set their rates for services. An unorganised worker refers to anyone working in the unorganised sector, including home-based workers, self-employed individuals, and wage workers not covered by ESIC or EPFO. The unorganised sector comprises small establishments with fewer than 10 workers that are not subject to ESIC or EPFO coverage. The Ministry of Labour & Employment in India, one of the country's oldest and most crucial ministries, is focused on improving the welfare and dignity of the labor force by ensuring the protection and rights of workers. This includes the implementation of labor laws that regulate the terms and conditions of employment for workers in both the organized and unorganised sectors.

E.Shram Portal:

E-Shram is a nationwide database of unorganised workers (NDUW) initiated by the Government of India through the Ministry of Labour & Employment. The main goal of this platform is to ensure that workers in the unorganised sector can access welfare benefits and social security measures more effectively. By registering unorganised workers and issuing identity cards, the platform makes it easier for them to avail themselves of government schemes, services, and benefits. The Ministry has created the eShram portal to build a comprehensive National Database of Unorganised Workers (NDUW), which will be linked with Aadhaar. This database will include information such as workers' names, occupations, addresses, types of work, educational qualifications, and skills to enhance their employability and extend social security benefits. It is the first national database to include workers from various unorganised sectors, including migrant workers, construction workers, gig workers, and platform workers.

Review of Literature:

Dongyuan Wu, Jason H. Huang, 24 January 2024, Gig workers have become an important component of the contemporary workforce and have generated extensive interest among researchers. The purpose of this article is to provide an integrative review of the literature on gig workers. In line with recent studies, we adopt a comprehensive definition of gig work, emphasizing its temporary nature, project-based pay, flexibility, and the absence of formal organizational membership. We begin by exploring the key themes in the literature using an input–process–output framework. Specifically, we examine the factors that motivate individuals to participate in gig work, the effects of gig work on workers through four different theoretical perspectives, and the outcomes individuals face as a result of their involvement in gig work. From this literature review, we identify six key areas for future research. Additionally, we discuss the practical implications for gig workers, traditional businesses, digital labor platforms, and society as a whole.

S.Divya, G.Barani Organisation, Purpose and Values (Book), 2024 Gig economy is a workforce in which the traditional employee labor system is replaced by a new system. It comprises of people engaging in ad-hoc-based jobs. In general gig economy is referred as short-term jobs, part-time jobs, contractual job, freelance, or brief contract that an individual is remunerated by accomplishing the assigned jobs. Digitalization all over the globe has made the people to access various services on any location through digital platforms. Digital platform hires gig worker and act as an intermediate to connect the gig workers and customers, it uses the algorithm which governs the gig worker's all over activity from assigning the job to leaving the platform. Since gig workers do not have the same employment status as traditional workers, providing them with social benefits comparable to those of regular employees presents a significant

challenge. Individuals engaged in gig work face numerous issues, including payment delays, irregular working hours, poor working conditions, lack of collective bargaining rights, and limited access to social security benefits. In response, the Government of India has implemented several initiatives aimed at improving the welfare of gig workers. These include the Social Security Code 2020, which includes specific provisions for gig and platform workers, training programs for gig workers, the e-Shram online portal for their registration, and other government efforts. This article seeks to assess the various social protection schemes available to gig workers and their awareness of these schemes in the Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu.

Suman Kharbanda, Poonam Bewtra and Supriya garden, (2024) The gig economy refers to a labor market dominated by short-term contracts, freelance or project-based work, and temporary or on-demand jobs, where workers are not employed by any company or organization on a permanent basis. In recent years, shifts in the employer-employee relationship have contributed to the rise of the gig economy globally. This has led to a variety of challenges and issues concerning workers, employers, and the economy at large. This paper outlines the factors that have driven the growth of the gig economy in India, as well as the risks and challenges faced by both the companies or platforms utilizing gig workers and the workers themselves, who do not have traditional nine-to-five jobs. The paper also examines and critically evaluates the policy initiatives taken by the Government of India to support gig workers. The study concludes with several policy recommendations and implications aimed at benefiting the gig economy.

Dr. Punamkumar Hinge, (2022), Gig Economy gives flexibility in work and time to gig workforce. Gig Economy saves the cost of company; they can acquire talent as per their needs. For Millennial and Z-

generation Gig Economy is becoming alternative arrangement for career. India ranks as the fifth-largest country for flexi-staffing, following the US, China, Brazil, and Japan. The global gig economy is projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 17%, generating \$455 billion by 2023. Technology has played a key role in expanding flexible work systems across geographical boundaries. Gig workers need to establish strong networks with individuals and companies, as well as market their specialized skills. Currently, there are no provisions for benefits such as bonuses, insurance, or other welfare activities provided by employers. To protect the interests of gig workers, the government should introduce changes in labor laws. While the gig economy offers considerable flexibility and independence, it also comes with challenges. One major issue is the difficulty in securing stable, consistent work. Since gig workers typically lack benefits or job protections, they are more vulnerable to exploitation. To address issues such as job insecurity, safety concerns, and the absence of employee benefits for these vital contributors to the nation's economic growth, policymakers need to consider the broader impact of the gig economy and take necessary steps to ensure its positive development.

Objectives of the Study:

1. Assess the level of awareness of the E-Shram application among gig workers in India.
2. Identify the barriers preventing gig workers from registering on the platform.
3. Recommend strategies to enhance awareness and increase adoption.

Research Methodology :

As the nature of the present study is largely exploratory, data was collected from secondary sources.

Problem Statement:

Despite the benefits of E-Shram, a large percentage of gig workers remain unaware of its existence or face

difficulties in registering. This study investigates the awareness levels, barriers, and possible solutions to improve the adoption of the E-Shram application among gig workers.

Barriers to E-Shram Registration:

1. Lack of Digital Literacy: Many gig workers, especially in semi-urban and rural areas, struggle with online registration.
2. Limited Outreach: Government campaigns have not effectively reached gig workers.
3. Complex Registration Process: Many workers reported facing technical issues while registering.
4. Trust Issues: Some workers expressed concerns over data privacy and misuse.

Recommendations:

To improve awareness and adoption of the E-Shram application, the study proposes the following strategies:

1. Launch Targeted Awareness Campaigns Use social media, gig platforms, and community radio to spread awareness, Conduct offline workshops in urban and rural areas.
2. Simplify the Registration Process Introduce a multi-language interface for better accessibility. Develop a helpline and Chabot assistance for real-time support.
3. Collaborate with Gig Platforms Companies like Zomato, Swiggy, Uber, and Ola should integrate E-Shram registration within their apps. Provide incentives for workers who complete registration.
4. Improve Trust and Transparency Conduct awareness drives on data security and how personal information is protected.

Data analysis:
Table .1 Awareness of Respondent

Awareness Platform	No. of Respondents
Community Meetings	1
Government Campaign	4
News Articles	1
Seminars	1
Social Media	17
T V Ads	4
Grand Total	28

Source: Primary Data

The above table and Word Cloud represents Awareness of the Respondents in the study. The highest no. of respondent is 17. According to them social media is the best platform to spread the awareness of E-shram portal.



Recommendations:

To improve awareness and adoption of the E-Shram application, the study proposes the following strategies:

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Use social media, gig platforms, and community radio to spread awareness.

Conduct offline workshops in urban and rural areas.

2. Simplify the Registration Process

Introduce a multi-language interface for better accessibility.

Develop a helpline and chatbot assistance for real-time support.

Collaborate with Gig Platforms:

Companies like Zomato, Swiggy, Uber, and Ola should integrate E-Shram registration within their apps.

Provide incentives for workers who complete registration.

Improve Trust and Transparency:

Conduct awareness drives on data security and how personal information is protected.

Conclusion: The E-Shram application is a crucial step toward formalizing and securing the gig workforce in India. However, awareness and adoption remain low due to digital illiteracy, outreach gaps, and registration difficulties. By implementing targeted campaigns,

simplifying the process, and partnering with gig platforms, the government can ensure that gig workers fully benefit from social security schemes.

Future research should explore the long-term impact of E-Shram and how policy changes can further improve worker protected.

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