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Gig Economy in Bihar – A Case Study of Patna Town

Abstract : *The gig economy has become one of the most important and fastest growing forms of employment in India due to technological advancement. It has become an important component of labour market. It has experienced accelerated structural transformation support by digital platforms and has reshaped the employment pattern, creating opportunities for unemployed and youth and in recent time, has become a source of their livelihood. This paper examines the meaning, nature and condition of gig workers and identifies their major challenges with some vital suggestions for its development in Patna Town in particular and Bihar in general.*

Keywords : Gig Economy, Platform Workers, Digital Transformation, Algorithmic Management, Collective Bargaining.

I. Introduction : The gig economy has become one of the most important and fastest growing forms of employment in India due to regular technological advancement and digital transformation. It has created online platforms for employment to people with customers through mobile applications. This new employment arrangement is known as gig economy and the persons involved are termed as gig workers. This employment system enables individuals to undertake temporary, flexible and project-based work instead of traditional form of employment. In India, the number of gig workers has significantly increased with digital platforms like food delivery services, ride-sharing companies, logistic providers and freelance market places and is also likely to increase more in future.¹ Today, it has become an important source of livelihood among unemployed youth, students living in urban areas, migrants and individuals seeking supplementary income to meet the livelihood expenditures.

In recent times, Bihar has also experienced increasing participation in gig work mainly due to rapid urbanization, growing uses of smartphones, better internet connectivity and expansion of digital platforms. Patna, being the state capital, has marked a significant increase in

app-based workers associated with food delivery, online retail, courier services, transportation and other household services. The Government of India has recognized the importance of gig workers in the *Code on Social Security, 2020*.² However, this economy faces some major challenges in its effective implementation. Hence, the present study is an attempt to study the conditions and major problems faced by the gig workers in Patna Town followed by some vital practical and effective suggestions to improve this form of employment.

II. Review Literature :

Shandilya, T.K. (2025)³ in his research paper admitted that gig economy is becoming very popular today and it is becoming a challenge for traditional economic system. According to him, Economics has become a multi-dimensional science. It is not concerned only with traditional statistics but is accustomed with using developed techniques like machine learning and artificial intelligence. Digital platform and internet has changed the employment format and given birth to gig economy in which there is much stress on temporary, flexible and free-natured work. People work with app-based services like food delivery, ride hailing, e-commerce logistics, etc. He has analysed the opportunities, challenges and future of gig economy in Bihar.

Banerjee, Taniya et.al (2024)⁴ in their paper highlighted the changing nature of the labour market and reasons responsible for rise of gig economy in Patna. An attempt has also been made by the researchers to investigate the initiatives and schemes taken for the safety of gig workers by the government.

Kumar, A. and Singh, R. (2023)⁵ in their joint research paper studied the condition of gig workers in India. They highlighted the challenges of gig workers which are concerned with irregular income, excessive work pressure, lack of collective bargaining and presence of very limited healthcare benefits.

Odegouda, R.T. (2026)⁶ in his study observed that gig economy has become an important source of employment by providing flexible, technology-driven work opportunities through digital platforms. In India, the rapid expansion of smartphone usage, internet connectivity and app-based services such as food delivery, e-commerce, transportation and logistics has significantly increased platform-based employment. The study examines the socio-economic status, employment conditions and challenges faced by platform workers in Dharwad Urban, Karnataka. It concludes that while the gig economy has expanded employment opportunities and income generation, platform workers continue to face challenges related to social security, welfare benefits, income stability and working conditions. It recommends strengthening labour regulations, extending social security coverage, improving awareness of welfare schemes and promoting skill development to ensure sustainable livelihoods and decent working conditions for platform workers.

Verma, A., Yadav, A. and Kumar, S. (2026)⁷ in their joint study have explained the socio-economic conditions, mental well-being and work-related challenges of gig workers in Rewari and Mahendragarh, Haryana. They observed that the workers have limited awareness of legal rights and social security. They have stressed on the need to strengthen education, social security, health insurance and legal awareness to improve welfare of gig workers.

Wood et.al (2019)⁸ in their research study highlighted the influence of algorithmic management on workers' performance, their income and autonomy. They also observed that platform ratings and automated monitoring systems also affect workers' income and job opportunities.

Niti Aayog (2022)⁹ highlighted the substantial growth in gig workers in India. The Aayog also highly recommended for expansion of social security schemes, financial inclusion, digital skill development and legal recognition of gig workers in India.

Research Gap : The reviewed literature mainly focuses on the growth of gig economy, working conditions, labour rights and social security at national level, metropolitan and big cities like Mumbai, Delhi, Bengluru and others. Very limited research work is available on medium-sized urban area or a city like Patna of a backward state like Bihar. Hence, an attempt has been made to fill the gap by providing an analysis of conditions and challenges faced by gig workers in Patna Town.

III. Objectives of the study : The study has following objectives:

1. To find the major problems of gig workers in Patna Town.
2. To assess the employment conditions of gig workers.
3. To examine the availability of social security and welfare measures for gig workers.
4. To give some vital suggestions for improving the condition of gig workers in Bihar.

IV. Research Methodology : The present research work is based on primary data collected from 80 respondents from Patna Town with the help of questionnaire. However, secondary data has been collected with the help of books, reports, journals, newspapers and websites.

V. Problems of Gig Workers : Though gig workers are emerging as one of the fastest growing form of employment but it faces several problems which are mentioned below:

1. Instable Income : Instable income is one of the major challenges faced by the gig workers because earning depend upon consumer demand, availability of customers' orders, working hours and many others. Their incomes also depend upon seasonal fluctuations and other related factors reducing earning opportunities. So, there is no guaranteed income to workers.

2. Lack of Social security : Gig workers suffer from lack of social security. They do not get provident fund, gratuity, leave, compensation and health insurance. When they become ill, they face financial hardship because their earnings stop immediately.

3. Long Working Hours : As the nature of the work of gig workers is flexible, they spend 12 to 16 hours per day online to achieve their targets. They also sacrifice their weekends and holidays. Such long working hours give fatigue and mental stress, sleep disorder and many more.

4. Limited Understanding of Algorithmic Management : In digital platforms, works are allocated through algorithmic management. Workers have very limited knowledge and understanding of algorithmic management. They do not assess how orders are assigned, ratings are given and incentives are finalized.

5. Job Insecurity : There is very limited security in jobs of gig workers. Irregular changes are made by the companies regarding payment policies, incentive structures, suspension of workers accounts. It suffers from permanent employment contract which increases uncertainty regarding future earnings and career development.

6. Limited Career Growth : Gig workers have very limited opportunities for career growth. They have lesser opportunity for professional development because they do not avail structured training programmes, skill enhancement initiatives and other career advancement opportunities like formal employment.

7. Weak Collective Bargaining : Another major problem before gig workers is that they possess weak collective bargaining in comparison to organized sector. They operate individually. Hence, they have limited bargaining power regarding negotiations of wages, incentives and employment conditions.

8. Social and Psychological Stress : Gig workers always face social and psychological stress due to regular pressure of work and target, customer complaints, uncertain earnings and competition with other workers. Working for long hours also disturbs their personal life which results in anxiety.

VI. Gig Workers in Bihar – A Case Study of Patna Town

Gender-wise Distribution

Table 1: Gender-wise Distribution

Gender	Respondents	Percentage
Male	65	81.0
Female	15	19.0
Total	80	100.0

Source: Personal Investigation

Table 1 shows the gender-wise distribution of the respondents taken into consideration. It shows that out of the total 80 respondents, the share of male is 65 (81 percent) while the share of women is 15 (19 percent). It indicates that there is dominance of male workers over female workers in this employment.

Age-wise Distribution

Table 2: Age-wise Distribution

Age Group (Years)	Respondents	Percentage
18–25	25	31.0
26–35	34	43.0
36–45	13	16.0
Above 45	8	10.0
Total	80	100.0

Source: Personal Investigation

Table 2 represents the age-wise distribution of respondents of gig workers. The study shows that out of the total respondents, 25 respondents (31 percent) come under 18-25 years of age, 34 respondents (43 percent) under 26-35 years, 13 respondents (16 percent) belong to 36-45 years and rest 8 respondents (10 percent) represent above 45 years of age. Hence, the study indicates that 74 percent of the total respondents are below 35 years of age and only 26 percent respondents are above 35 years of age.

Educational Qualification

Table 3: Educational Qualification

Educational Qualification	Respondents	Percentage
Up to Secondary	13	16.0
Higher Secondary	24	30.0
Graduate	35	44.0
Postgraduate & Above	8	10.0
Total	80	100.0

Source: Personal Investigation

Table 3 provides the picture of educational qualification of the respondents included in the study. Out of the total respondents, 13 respondents (16 percent) are having education upto secondary, 24 respondents (30 percent) upto higher secondary, 35 respondents (44 percent) are graduates while 8 respondents (10 percent) are reported postgraduate and similar qualifications. The study indicates that more than 50 percent respondents are graduate and above.

Reasons for Becoming a Gig Worker

Table 4: Main Reason for Becoming a Gig Worker

Reason	Respondents	Percentage
Unemployment	31	39.0

Flexible Working Hours	21	26.0
Better Income Opportunity	15	19.0
Part-time Employment	11	14.0
Others	2	3.0
Total	80	100.0

Source: Personal Investigation

An attempt has also been made to find out the reasons behind joining this type of job. Table 4 shows that out of the total respondents, 31 respondents (39 percent) joined this job due to unemployment, 21 respondents (26.0 percent) preferred due to flexible working hours, 15 respondents (19 percent) opted for better income opportunity, 11 respondents (14 percent) accepted it as part time employment while 2 respondents (3 percent) due to other reasons. Hence, it is clear that main reason for joining the job is unemployment, followed by flexible working hours, better income opportunity and part-time job.

Monthly Income

Table 5: Monthly Income

Income (₹)	Respondents	Percentage
Below 15,000	18	23.0
15,001–25,000	37	46.0
25,001–35,000	18	23.0
Above 35,000	7	9.0
Total	80	100.0

Source: Personal Investigation

Monthly income is most important for any type of employment. Table 5 describes the monthly income of respondents taken under study. The study reveals that 18 respondents (23 percent) earn below Rs. 15000, 37 respondents (46 percent) earn between Rs. 15001-25000, 18 respondents (23 percent) between Rs. 25001-35000 and only 7 respondents (9 percent) earn more than Rs. 35000 and above. Hence, the study indicates that about 69 percent of the respondents earn below Rs. Rs. 25000 and 31 percent earn above Rs. 25000.

Social Security Benefits

Table 6: Availability of Social Security Benefits

Response	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	11.0	14.0
No	69.0	86.0
Total	80	100.0

Source: Personal Investigation

The researcher has also made an attempt to know the availability of social security benefits to gig workers. Table 6 highlights that 69 respondents (86 percent) out of the total respondents, replied in negative and only 11 respondents (14 percent) replied in affirmative. Hence, the study indicates that majority of the respondents are not aware and availing of social security benefits.

Welfare Measures : Apart from social security, the researcher has tried to assess the level of satisfaction of respondents with welfare measures.

Table 7: Satisfaction with Welfare Measures

Level of Satisfaction	Respondents	Percentage
Highly Satisfied	4	5.0
Satisfied	12	15.0

Neutral	16	20.0
Dissatisfied	28	35.0
Highly Dissatisfied	20	25.0
Total	80	100.0

Source: Personal Investigation

Table 7 reveals that 48 respondents (60 percent) of the respondents are dissatisfied with the welfare measures and only 16 respondents (20 percent) remain satisfied while 16 respondents (20 percent) are neutral against the motion.

Major Problems of Gig Workers

Table 8: Major Problems Faced by Gig Workers

Problem	Respondents	Percentage
Income Instability	25	31.0
Long Working Hours	17	21.0
Lack of Social Security	21	26.0
Work Stress	11	14.0
Job Insecurity	6	8.0
Total	80	100.0

Source: Personal Investigation

Table 8 represents the major problems faced by gig workers in Bihar. It shows that out of the total respondents, 25 respondents (31 percent) face income instability, followed by lack of social security 26 percent, long working hours by 21 percent, work stress by 14 percent and job insecurity by 8 percent respondents. Hence, it may be concluded that income instability and lack of social security emerge as the two most significant problems faced by gig workers in Patna.

Awareness of Government Welfare Schemes

Table 9: Awareness of Government Welfare Schemes

Response	Respondents	Percentage
Aware	27	34.0
Not Aware	53	66.0
Total	80	100.0

Source: Personal Investigation

Table 9 gives information about awareness of government welfare schemes among gig workers. Out of the total respondents, 53 respondents (66 percent) are not aware of about government welfare schemes while only 27 respondents (34 percent) have knowledge about the government welfare schemes.

Overall Job Satisfaction

Table 10: Overall Job Satisfaction

Level of Satisfaction	Respondents	Percentage
Highly Satisfied	6	8.0
Satisfied	22	27.0
Neutral	19	24.0
Dissatisfied	22	27.0
Highly Dissatisfied	11	14.0
Total	80	100.0

Source: Personal Investigation

Table 10 highlights the overall job satisfaction of gig workers towards their job. It shows that 28

respondents (35 percent) expressed their satisfaction towards the job, 33 respondents (41 percent) showed their dissatisfaction while 19 respondents (24 percent) were silent over the issue.

VII. Findings of the study :

1. The gender-wise distribution of gig workers in Patna Town reveals that it is dominated by male workers. It shows that 81 percent of the workers are male and only 19 percent of the workers are female. (Table 1)
2. In age-wise study of gig workers, the study reveals that 74 percent of the total respondents are below 35 years of age and 26 percent of the respondents are above 35 years of age.. It shows that this economy is dominated by young people. (Table 2)
3. Regarding educational qualification, the study reveals that more than 50 percent of the workers are graduate and postgraduate while 30 percent workers are having education upto Higher Secondary and only 16 percent qualification upto Secondary level. (Table 3)
4. While studying the reasons for becoming a gig worker, the researcher has found that unemployment is the main reason for joining this job, followed by flexible working hours, better income opportunity and part-time employment. (Table 4)
5. Monthly income is vital for a job. In context of monthly income of gig workers, the study reveals that 69 percent of the respondents earn below Rs. 25,000 per month while 31 percent of the respondents earn more than Rs. 25,000 per month. (Table 5)
6. In context of availability of social security benefits, it has been observed that 86 percent of the gig workers are ignorant about benefits like provident fund, pension or health insurance while 14 percent workers showed their acquaintance. It is one of the major concerns before gig workers in Patna Town. (Table 6)
7. Regarding satisfaction with welfare measures, the study reveals that 60 percent of the respondents are dissatisfied and only 20 percent are satisfied. It shows that there is no proper and adequate support from different platforms and government. (Table 7)
8. An attempt has also been made to find out major problems faced by gig workers in Patna Town in Bihar. The major problem before gig workers is income instability, followed by lack of social security, long working hours and work stress. (Table 8)
9. Regarding awareness of government welfare schemes, 53 respondents (66 percent) showed their unawareness while 27 respondents (34 percent) vouched the schemes. (Table 9)
10. In last, an attempt has also been made to assess the overall job satisfaction among gig workers. It has been observed that the number of dissatisfied respondents is more than number of satisfied respondents which is mainly due to uncertain income, lacks of benefits, job insecurity, etc. (Table 10)

VIII. Suggestions of the study : On the basis of above study, following suggestions may be given for strengthening gig economy in Patna Town in particular and Bihar in general:

1. The government should create effective legal framework defining the rights and liabilities of gig workers. It should have well-defined provisions relating to working hours, compensation and settlement of disputes. Legal protection to gig workers must be strengthened.
2. The earnings of gig workers must be fair and transparent. Platform companies should adopt transparent payment system with clear and well-defined payment structure.
3. There must be regular training programs for development of gig workers. It will enhance their digital literacy, customer service skill, their productivity and develop career opportunities for future.

4. Another effective suggestion for gig workers is that there must be transparency in algorithms. It will help them in understanding basis of rating, incentives and work allocation and evaluation of their performance.
5. Gig workers should be encouraged to strengthen their collective bargaining capacity. It will help them while negotiating with platform companies on issues like wages, working conditions and other benefits.
6. An effective grievance redressal system should be developed which will help the workers in resolving their complaints quickly and fairly.
7. All the platform gig workers should come under the purview of accident insurance, health insurance and other benefits to ensure their long-term sustainability.

IX. Sum up : Finally, it may be concluded that gig economy has emerged as one of the fastest growing form of employment and an important option for livelihood for young and unemployed youth in Patna Town of Bihar State who are bereft of similar opportunities of formal labour market. It has created significant opportunities for unemployed and youth while exposing the several challenges before this economy. The implementation of above mentioned suggestions would strengthen their welfare, improve income security, enhance their skill and sustainable growth for the gig economy in Bihar. In this context, coordinated effort of Government of Bihar, platform companies, financial institutions and civil society is urgently required for the growth of gig economy.

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