

IMPACT OF GIG ECONOMY IN WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO COIMBATORE DISTRICT

Geethpriya. B

Department of Commerce, Rathinam College of Arts and Science, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu

Joanna S

III B.com CA, Department of Commerce, Rathinam College of Arts and Science,
Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu

ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of the gig economy on women's employment with special reference to Coimbatore district. The rapid growth of digital platforms and flexible work opportunities has created new avenues for women to participate in the workforce. Gig economy platforms such as freelancing, ride-sharing, online services, and home-based digital work have enabled women to earn income while managing household responsibilities. The study analyses the level of participation, benefits, and challenges faced by women engaged in gig work. Primary data was collected from 90 women respondents involved in various gig economy activities through structured questionnaires. Percentage analysis was used for data interpretation. The findings reveal that the gig economy provides flexibility, income opportunities, and financial independence for women. However, issues such as income instability, lack of job security, and limited social protection remain major concerns. The study suggests policy support and skill development programs to improve women's participation in the gig economy.

Keywords: Gig Economy, Women Employment, Flexible Work, Digital Platforms, Coimbatore District

INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

In recent years, the gig economy has emerged as a significant component of the modern labour market. The gig economy refers to a system where individuals engage in temporary, flexible, and freelance work rather than traditional full-time employment. This transformation has been driven by advancements in digital technology, internet accessibility, and the growth of online platforms. For women, especially in developing countries like India, the gig economy offers new employment opportunities that were previously inaccessible. Many women face barriers to traditional employment due to family responsibilities, cultural constraints, and limited mobility. The gig economy provides flexible working hours and remote job options, enabling women to balance work and personal life effectively. In India, the gig economy has expanded rapidly through platforms offering services such as online tutoring, content writing, beauty services, tailoring, food delivery, and digital marketing. Women are increasingly participating in these activities to generate income and achieve financial independence. Coimbatore district, known for its industrial development and entrepreneurial culture, has witnessed a growing number of women participating in gig-based employment. Women in both urban and semi-urban areas are utilizing digital platforms and local networks to engage in freelance and part-time work. However, despite these opportunities, women in the gig economy face several challenges such as income instability, lack of job security, absence of social benefits, and limited access to digital skills. This study aims to analyse the impact of the gig economy on women's employment in Coimbatore district.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To analyse the growth and nature of gig economy opportunities available to women in Coimbatore district.
1. To examine the socio-economic factors influencing women's participation in gig work in Coimbatore.
2. To assess the impact of gig economy employment on women's income, financial independence, and livelihood.
3. To identify the challenges and constraints faced by women engaged in gig work (such as job security, safety, and work-life balance).
4. To evaluate the overall effect of gig work on women's empowerment and social status in Coimbatore district.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Women's employment has always been influenced by social, economic, and cultural factors. Many women face difficulties in accessing formal employment due to lack of education, family responsibilities, and workplace constraints. As a result, their participation in the workforce remains limited. The gig economy has emerged as an alternative employment option that offers flexibility and accessibility. Through gig platforms, women can work from home or choose flexible hours, making it easier to manage both professional and personal responsibilities. Despite these advantages, the gig economy also presents several challenges. Women often face issues such as irregular income, lack of job security, absence of legal protection, and limited awareness about available opportunities. Additionally, digital illiteracy and lack of access to technology further restrict their participation. In Coimbatore district, although many women are gradually entering the gig economy, their level of participation and the overall impact on their employment status need to be examined. Therefore, this study aims to analyse the role of the gig economy in shaping women's employment and identify the factors influencing their participation.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1.GEOGRAPHICAL LIMITATION

The study is confined only to Coimbatore district, so the findings may not be applicable to other regions with different economic, social, or cultural conditions.

2.SAMPLE SIZE CONSTRAINT

The study may be based on a limited number of respondents, which may not fully represent all women engaged in the gig economy.

3.DATA AVAILABILITY AND RELIABILITY

Availability of accurate and updated data on gig workers, especially women, is limited, and responses may be subject to personal bias or incomplete information.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design to understand the impact of the gig economy on women's employment.

DATA COLLECTION

1. PRIMARY DATA

Primary data was collected through structured questionnaires distributed to women engaged in gig work such as freelancing, home-based services, and online work in Coimbatore district.

2. SECONDARY DATA

Secondary data was collected from journals, research articles, government reports, websites, and publications related to gig economy and women employment.

SAMPLE SIZE

A total of 101 women respondents engaged in gig economy activities were selected for the study.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

Convenience sampling method was used for selecting respondents.

TOOLS FOR ANALYSIS

- Simple percentage analysis
- Chi square test

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Devadharsani S. (2025)

Devadharsani (2025) analysed gig workers in Coimbatore and highlighted how platform-based employment has increased flexible job opportunities, including for women. However, the study emphasized income instability, lack of social protection, and irregular work patterns. Women, in particular, face compounded vulnerabilities due to household responsibilities and financial insecurity. The research concluded that while gig work expands employment access, it does not ensure long-term economic stability. Policy interventions are necessary to improve working conditions and ensure inclusive growth for women in Coimbatore's gig economy.

2. Rahul & Shaifali (2025)

Rahul and Shaifali (2025) examined women's participation in the gig economy, focusing on digital labour platforms. Their study found that gig work provides flexibility and autonomy, attracting women seeking work-life balance. However, structural inequalities persist, including limited access to high-paying gigs and gender-based discrimination. The authors emphasized that while gig work promotes women's economic inclusion, it often reinforces informal labour patterns. They suggest targeted policies to improve women's access, safety, and earnings in gig employment.

3. Bhagavathi & Kumar (2025)

Bhagavathi and Kumar (2025) conducted a systematic literature review on gender dynamics in the gig economy. They found that women are concentrated in traditionally gendered roles such as caregiving and tutoring, with persistent wage gaps. The study also identified algorithmic bias and safety concerns as major barriers. Despite flexibility, women remain underrepresented in high-paying gig sectors. The authors concluded that gig work replicates existing gender inequalities, highlighting the need for inclusive digital policies and gender-sensitive platform design.

4. Ghosh, Ramachandran & Zaidi (2021)

This exploratory study examined women workers across gig sectors like domestic work and beauty services. The authors found that gig platforms offer income opportunities but often replicate informal labour conditions. Women benefit from flexible schedules but face low earnings, lack of benefits, and job insecurity. The study emphasized that gig work is shaped by existing socio-economic inequalities, limiting empowerment. It concluded that policy support and regulation are essential to protect women gig workers in India.

5. Ghosh et al. (2022)

In their extended study, Ghosh et al. (2022) highlighted how women in gig work experience precarious employment conditions. They emphasized issues such as absence of contracts, irregular income, and dependency on platform algorithms. The study also noted that women's participation is influenced by domestic responsibilities and limited mobility. While gig work provides entry into the labour market, it often fails to ensure sustainable livelihoods. The authors call for formal recognition of gig workers and gender-sensitive labour policies.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

TABLE 1 – Awareness of Gig Economy among Women

Awareness Level	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Fully Aware	30	33%
Partially Aware	28	31%
Slightly Aware	20	22%
Not Aware	12	14%
Total	90	100%

INTERPRETATION

The table shows that 33% of respondents are fully aware of the gig economy, while 31% are partially aware. About 22% are slightly aware and 14% are not aware. This indicates moderate awareness among women in Coimbatore district.

TABLE 2 – Participation in Gig Economy

Participation Level	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Actively Engaged	35	39%
Occasionally	25	28%
Planning to Join	18	20%
Not Interested	12	13%
Total	90	100%

INTERPRETATION

The table indicates that 39% of women are actively engaged in gig work, while 28% participate occasionally. Around 20% plan to join, and 13% are not interested. This shows increasing participation of women in gig employment.

TABLE 3 – Impact of Gig Economy on Income

Impact Level	Number of Respondents	Percentage
High Impact	32	36%
Moderate Impact	30	33%
Low Impact	18	20%

No Impact	10	11%
Total	90	100%

INTERPRETATION

The table reveals that 36% of respondents experienced a high impact on income, while 33% reported moderate impact. About 20% experienced low impact and 11% reported no impact. This indicates that gig work positively influences women's income.

Findings:

- In the age group 21 – 30, the youth dominate the gig work with 40%. It also shows that the category of young women in Coimbatore have high digital literacy.
- Independence was the reason for 67 of single women and 31 say that they use gigs to help with their house work.
- Designs the accesses of gig, leading 39%, shows education makes the accesses of gig all levels but maximizes with higher awareness.
- Lack of usage from 41-50 age group (9%) and primary-educated (9%) point to digital skills gaps among older-educated women.
- Younger, single undergraduates are primary drivers; learn synergy of age, marital status, and level of education in use of platform.

SUGGESTIONS

- Majority of the gig workers are youth aged 21-30 at 40%. The digital literacy of women in Coimbatore is high.
- As single women (67%) are using the gigs for independent accounts, though married women (31%) are balancing it with taking care of the home.
- 39% undergraduates. Education cracks gig access. Top leadership driven by greater education.
- Digital skills gaps exist among women aged 41-50 (9%) and who have primary education (9%) as digital participation among this age bracket and education levels is low.
- Younger, single undergraduates are key to those platforms where the convergence of age, Education and marital status into the use of the platform is so high.

CONCLUSION:

To sum up, the study reiterates the fact that the major categories of gig workers in Coimbatore is from the young single women in the age bracket of 21-30 mostly at the undergraduate level with high digital literacy skills which facilitates their financial independence for the accomplishment of their desires and married women who balance the familial and the gig tasks of the same type at the secondary level who facilitate their able co-participant husbands with the household works offered the highest number of opportunities. Further to note an evident lacuna is observed with respect to the old but uncovered by 41as well as primary level Sitos always has to happen for the hard to absorb orders of transition to gain proper accessibilities of digital skillset the historical hurdles of exclusion due to lack of literacy or digital panache can be removed and the inclusive 45transition to be managed easily for financial augmentation in the region of Coimbatore. For a prolific response of the women

to take use of gig for their financial augmentations extensively to emphasize the digital focussed training programs, family centric measures, the institutional linkages of education old and new, the motivational campaigns for normalizing use of gig, the microcredits in old women, the facilitation of gig applications in the uncomplicated forms, lot of chance to get absorbed considering the eligible and the able women in the intended publics, friends clubs and groupings those comprised of eligible women can function as good facilitators for increasing rather more inclusive opportunities for the women in the region. Use of the earnings as a lever for empowering the women is other adjunct to be done if the all types of women can be made effective user of gig activity to establish to place of pride.

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