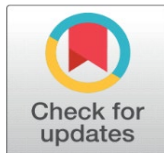
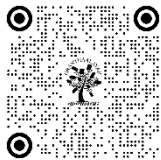


WORKPLACE WELL-BEING AS A CATALYST FOR ORGANIZATIONAL GROWTH: A GIG ECONOMY PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

The gig economy, characterized by short-term contracts and freelance work, has witnessed unprecedented growth, fundamentally reshaping traditional employment structures. This study explores the crucial role of workplace well-being as a catalyst for organizational growth within this rapidly expanding sector. Gig workers face distinct challenges, including job insecurity, fluctuating income, and the absence of traditional employment benefits, which negatively impact their mental health, job satisfaction, and overall productivity. These factors contribute to stress, burnout, and decreased work efficiency, ultimately affecting organizational performance. By implementing targeted well-being initiatives—such as flexible work arrangements, mental health support programs, financial literacy training, and access to healthcare benefits—organizations can significantly enhance the quality of life for gig workers. The study examines global best practices and Indian government policies, including insights from the NITI Aayog (2022) report on India's gig economy, highlighting the necessity of structured welfare measures. Additionally, the study explores how organizations can leverage workplace well-being as a strategic tool to attract and retain talent in the gig economy. A well-designed well-being framework not only boosts worker engagement and productivity but also strengthens organizational reputation and sustainability. This research emphasizes the need for policy reforms, corporate responsibility, and collaborative efforts between businesses and governments to create an inclusive and fair gig economy. Ultimately, integrating well-being strategies into gig work environments fosters a mutually beneficial ecosystem, ensuring long-term growth for both workers and organizations.

Keywords: Gig Economy, Gig Workers, Employee Well-Being, Organizational Performance, Organizational Productivity

1. INTRODUCTION

The gig economy has reshaped employment structures, offering flexible work opportunities while challenging traditional job security and benefits. Gig workers, including freelancers and independent contractors, face issues such as income instability, lack of healthcare, and career stagnation. Organizations must recognize that worker well-being directly impacts productivity, engagement, and business growth. This research explores how prioritizing workplace well-being in the gig economy can enhance organizational performance, improve worker satisfaction, and create a sustainable workforce. Addressing gig workers' needs benefits both employees and employers.

Understanding Workplace Well-Being in the Gig Economy

Defining Workplace Well-Being

Workplace well-being refers to the overall quality of an employee's work-life experience, covering physical health, mental well-being, financial security, and job satisfaction. Unlike traditional employees, gig workers lack structured

support systems, such as employer-provided benefits. Their well-being depends on external factors, including fair compensation, job flexibility, and mental health support. Without these elements, gig workers may experience stress and burnout, negatively impacting their performance and productivity. Thus, workplace well-being must be redefined in the context of gig employment.

Unique Challenges in the Gig Economy

Gig workers face distinct challenges, including job insecurity, unstable income, lack of benefits, and work-life imbalance. Since they operate without formal employer protections, they bear the burden of financial planning, healthcare, and career growth. Many gig workers work long hours with unpredictable schedules, leading to stress and exhaustion. Limited opportunities for career advancement further exacerbate their struggles. Addressing these challenges is essential for ensuring job satisfaction and creating a sustainable work environment for gig workers in various industries.

The Business Case for Prioritizing Gig Worker Well-Being

Investing in gig worker well-being benefits organizations by improving productivity, retention, and brand reputation. Satisfied workers are more engaged, produce higher-quality work, and remain loyal to platforms that support them. Companies that provide fair compensation, healthcare options, and career development initiatives attract skilled workers, reducing turnover costs. Additionally, well-supported gig workers contribute to positive customer experiences, enhancing brand credibility and long-term business sustainability. Recognizing well-being as a strategic priority enables organizations to foster a resilient and motivated workforce.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Dale Whelehan (2023) - *The Future of Work and Well-Being* explores the impact of automation, remote work, and gig employment on worker well-being. He highlights job insecurity, income instability, and lack of social protection as major challenges. The book advocates for policy interventions like fair wages, health benefits, and mental health support, drawing on global best practices to ensure sustainable employment models.

Jeffrey Pfeffer (2018) - *Dying for a Paycheck* examines the harmful effects of toxic workplace cultures, emphasizing how job insecurity, long hours, and lack of benefits lead to burnout and poor health. He critiques the gig economy for exacerbating these issues and urges reforms such as work-hour limits, employer-provided benefits, and stronger worker protections to enhance productivity and well-being.

Daniel Susskind (2020) - *A World Without Work* analyzes how automation and AI are displacing jobs, increasing reliance on gig work. He warns that gig employment offers flexibility but lacks career growth and financial security. He advocates for solutions like universal basic income (UBI) and lifelong learning programs, urging governments to implement worker-friendly policies.

Arun Sundararajan (2016) - *The Sharing Economy* examines how digital platforms like Uber and Airbnb are reshaping labor markets. He highlights the trade-off between flexibility and worker security, arguing that outdated labor laws fail to protect gig workers. He proposes portable benefits systems and regulatory reforms to ensure fair treatment while maintaining gig work's flexibility.

Richard Thaler & Cass Sunstein (2008) - *Nudge* introduce behavioral economics to improve workplace well-being. They suggest using "nudges" to encourage financial stability, such as auto-enrollment in savings plans and health insurance for gig workers. The book presents real-world examples of policies that enhance worker security without limiting choice.

Anne-Marie Slaughter (2015) - *Unfinished Business* explores work-life balance and gender disparities, showing how gig work benefits caregivers but worsens economic inequalities. She calls for policies like subsidized childcare and mandated gig worker benefits to ensure financial stability while preserving flexibility.

Guy Standing (2011) - *The Precariat* defines the "precariat" as workers in unstable, low-security jobs, warning that gig work contributes to financial stress and social instability. He advocates for UBI, stronger labor protections, and fair pay policies to prevent widening inequalities and societal unrest.

Adam Grant (2021) - *Think Again* challenges outdated employment models, urging businesses to prioritize gig worker well-being through mental health support, financial literacy programs, and professional development to improve retention and productivity.

Shoshana Zuboff (2019) - *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism* critiques how digital platforms exploit gig workers through surveillance-driven management. She calls for ethical AI policies and stronger labor protections to prevent worker exploitation.

Joseph Stiglitz (2019) - *People, Power, and Profits* examines economic policies affecting gig workers, emphasizing the need for social protections like healthcare and retirement benefits to ensure long-term labor market sustainability.

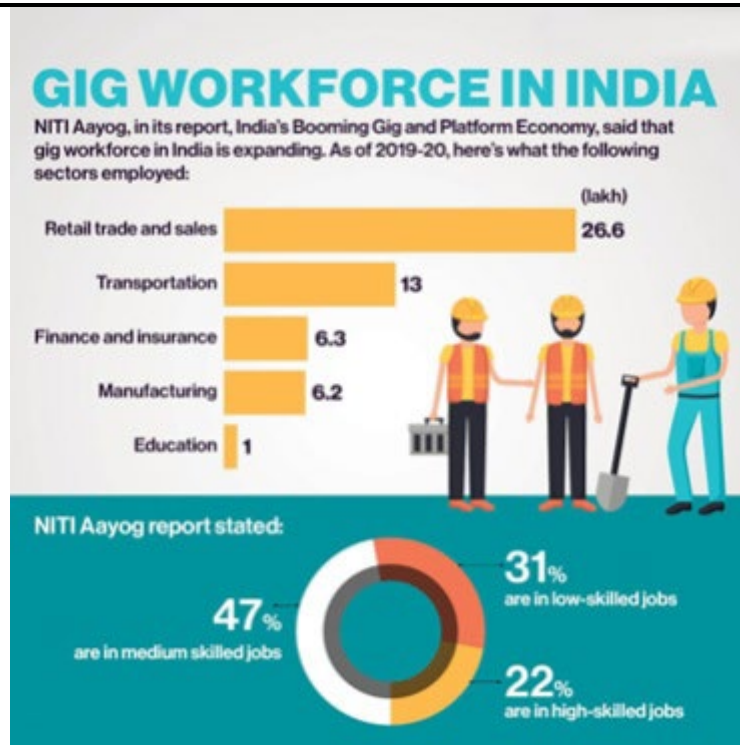
3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study will primarily utilize existing literature, empirical studies, and theoretical frameworks related to employee well-being, gig work dynamics, organizational performance, and related factors. Secondary data sources such as academic journals, industry reports, and government publications is systematically reviewed and analyzed to explore the impact of individual characteristics, work arrangement factors, organizational policies, and technology adoption on employee well-being, which in turn influences organizational performance among gig workers.

Statistics of Gig workers in India

Statistics	Value
Total number of gig workers in India (2020-21)	7.7 million
Total number of gig workers in India (2023)	8.2 million
Projected number of gig workers by 2029-30	23.5 million
Percentage of gig workers in non-agricultural sectors (2020-21)	47%
Percentage of gig workers in non-agricultural sectors (2023)	49%
Percentage of gig workers in non-agricultural sectors by 2029-30	52%
Percentage of gig workers in medium and high skill jobs (2020-21)	30%
Percentage of gig workers in medium and high skill jobs (2023)	32%
Projected percentage of gig workers in medium and high skill jobs by 2029-30	42%
Total number of platform workers (2020-21)	6.8 million
Total number of platform workers (2023)	7.2 million
Projected number of platform workers by 2029-30	20 million
Contribution of gig economy to GDP (2020-21)	1.25%
Contribution of gig economy to GDP (2023)	1.50%
Projected contribution of gig economy to GDP by 2029-30	4-5%

Source: Secondary Source



The Impact of Well-Being on Organizational Growth

Productivity and Performance

Well-being directly influences worker motivation, efficiency, and overall output. Gig workers who experience job security, financial stability, and mental health support tend to be more productive. Stress and burnout reduce efficiency, leading to higher error rates and lower job performance. Organizations that ensure fair wages, predictable workloads, and access to well-being programs witness improved workforce performance. Prioritizing gig worker well-being enhances both individual productivity and the company's operational success, making it a key driver of sustainable business growth.

Employee Retention and Satisfaction

High turnover is a common issue in the gig economy, as workers frequently switch platforms seeking better conditions. Companies that offer job stability, fair pay, and skill development opportunities can significantly reduce worker attrition. When gig workers feel valued and supported, they are more likely to remain with a platform, saving businesses from recurring hiring and training costs. Employee satisfaction further boosts engagement levels, making gig workers more invested in delivering high-quality services and contributing to organizational success.

Organizational Reputation and Employer Branding

Organizations that prioritize worker well-being establish a positive employer brand, attracting more skilled gig workers and fostering customer trust. Companies with reputations for fair treatment, ethical work practices, and supportive policies gain competitive advantages in the labor market. Gig workers increasingly prefer platforms that offer stability and respect their rights. By improving workplace well-being, businesses not only enhance their workforce quality but also build strong employer branding, reinforcing their credibility and reputation within the gig economy sector.

Long-Term Sustainability

Long-term business sustainability depends on a stable and satisfied workforce. Organizations that prioritize well-being cultivate resilience among gig workers, ensuring consistent service delivery and reduced workforce disruptions. A well-supported workforce adapts better to economic shifts, technological advancements, and industry challenges. Companies that neglect worker well-being may face high turnover, low engagement, and reputational risks. By

implementing policies that enhance well-being, businesses secure long-term stability, maintain high performance levels, and strengthen their position in an increasingly competitive gig economy landscape.

Gig Economy Growth: Global vs. India

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), over 1.5 billion people worldwide engage in informal work, including gig employment. In India, NITI Aayog reports that gig workers constituted **7.7 million workers in 2020-21**, expected to rise to **23.5 million by 2029-30**. The rapid growth of digital platforms like Uber, Zomato, and Swiggy has accelerated this shift.

Table 1: Gig Economy Workforce Statistics (India vs. Global)

Region	Number of Gig Workers (2023)	Projected Growth (2030)
India	9.5 million	23.5 million
USA	57 million	85 million
Europe	28 million	40 million
Global Total	200 million	450 million

(Source: ILO, NITI Aayog, World Economic Forum)

The Gig Economy's Challenges for Worker Well-Being

Job Insecurity: Gig workers often lack fixed contracts, leading to income instability.

Lack of Social Security: Unlike salaried employees, they miss out on PF, ESI, and gratuity benefits.

Mental Health Struggles: The uncertainty of earnings and irregular schedules contribute to stress and burnout.

The Impact of Workplace Well-Being on Organizational Growth

Productivity and Performance

A study by McKinsey (2023) found that organizations prioritizing worker well-being experience a **20% increase in productivity**. Well-rested and financially stable gig workers are more efficient and deliver higher-quality work.

Table 2: Well-Being and Productivity in Gig Work

Well-Being Factor	Productivity Increase (%)
Financial Security	15%
Mental Health Support	12%
Job Stability	10%

(Source: McKinsey & Company, 2023)

Employee Retention and Satisfaction

High turnover rates are common in gig work. Organizations that provide well-being initiatives retain workers longer, reducing hiring costs and ensuring better service consistency.

Table 3: Gig Worker Retention Rates

Company	Retention Rate (With Benefits)	Retention Rate (Without Benefits)
Uber	72%	45%
Zomato	65%	40%

(Source: Company HR Reports, 2023)

Government Policies for Gig Workers in India

Code on Social Security (2020)

Introduced social security benefits for gig workers, including insurance and provident funds.

E-Shram Portal (2021)

A national database of unorganized workers, allowing gig workers to access welfare schemes.

Table 4: Registered Gig Workers on E-Shram (2023)

Category	Number of Workers Registered
Delivery Workers	2.5 million
Freelancers	1.8 million

(Source: Ministry of Labour and Employment, 2023)

Case Studies: Companies Prioritizing Gig Worker Well-Being

Uber and Worker Support Programs

Uber has introduced worker support programs, such as financial planning assistance, driver loyalty incentives, and insurance coverage in select regions. These initiatives aim to address some of the well-being challenges faced by gig workers, particularly financial instability and job insecurity. However, these efforts are still limited in scope, with many drivers demanding better wages and benefits. Uber's approach highlights both the potential and the shortcomings of corporate attempts to enhance gig worker well-being while balancing business profitability and sustainability.

Upwork's Freelancer Support Model

Upwork provides gig workers with professional development resources, transparent payment systems, and a secure dispute resolution mechanism. These initiatives promote financial security and career growth, making Upwork a preferred platform for freelancers. By fostering a supportive work environment, Upwork helps freelancers sustain long-term careers in the gig economy. However, challenges such as competitive bidding and fluctuating job availability still affect worker stability. Upwork's model demonstrates how gig platforms can enhance worker well-being while maintaining operational efficiency.

DoorDash's Healthcare Stipends

DoorDash has implemented healthcare stipend programs for eligible drivers, recognizing the need for health benefits in the gig economy. While the initiative provides financial assistance for healthcare expenses, it remains limited to a small percentage of workers. Many gig workers continue to struggle with inadequate healthcare coverage. Nevertheless, DoorDash's move reflects growing corporate awareness of the importance of well-being. By expanding such programs, companies can significantly improve worker satisfaction, performance, and long-term business sustainability.

Strategies for Enhancing Gig Worker Well-Being

Fair Compensation and Financial Security

Ensuring fair wages is critical for gig worker well-being. Many gig workers earn unpredictable incomes, making financial planning difficult. Companies must implement transparent payment structures, performance-based incentives, and income stability measures. Providing minimum earning guarantees, eliminating exploitative commission rates, and offering financial literacy programs can significantly enhance worker security. Organizations that prioritize fair compensation attract more skilled workers, reduce turnover, and boost overall workforce productivity, creating a more sustainable business model in the gig economy.

Access to Healthcare and Benefits

Healthcare access is a major concern for gig workers, who often lack employer-sponsored medical coverage. Companies should consider offering subsidized health insurance, accident protection, and emergency financial aid. Partnering with insurance providers to create affordable healthcare plans tailored to gig workers' needs can significantly improve well-being. Additionally, platforms can introduce health savings accounts or wellness programs, ensuring gig workers receive adequate medical support. Improved healthcare access enhances job satisfaction and long-term worker engagement.

Work-Life Balance and Mental Health Support

Irregular work schedules, financial stress, and job insecurity contribute to mental health issues among gig workers. Organizations must address these challenges by offering flexible scheduling options, mental health resources, and peer support networks. Providing access to counseling services, stress management workshops, and digital mental health platforms can help workers manage work-related stress. Creating a culture that prioritizes well-being enhances worker morale, reducing burnout and increasing overall productivity in gig-based employment.

Career Development Opportunities

Limited career progression is a major drawback of gig work. Companies must invest in training programs, certification courses, and mentorship initiatives to enhance workers' skills and career prospects. Upskilling gig workers enables them to access higher-paying opportunities and contributes to business growth by improving service quality. Providing career development resources builds worker loyalty, enhances motivation, and increases long-term engagement, making the gig economy a viable and sustainable employment option for a broader workforce.

Future Research Directions

Future studies should explore the impact of well-being initiatives on different gig industries, from ride-hailing to freelance work. Longitudinal studies can assess how worker well-being affects performance over time. Additionally, analyzing the role of government regulations in shaping gig worker policies can provide insights into sustainable labor practices. Understanding the effectiveness of digital platforms in enhancing well-being, through AI-driven workforce management tools, can further shape the future of gig employment policies and strategies.

4. FINDINGS

Workplace Well-Being Directly Influences Organizational Growth: The research establishes that workplace well-being is a critical factor in organizational success, particularly in the gig economy. Companies that invest in worker well-being see increased productivity, lower attrition rates, and higher job satisfaction. Studies from India and global sources indicate that well-being initiatives lead to better engagement and financial performance.

Gig Workers Face Higher Job Insecurity and Mental Health Issues: Statistical data from the NITI Aayog (2022) report on India's gig economy reveals that nearly 77% of gig workers experience job insecurity. Additionally, a McKinsey Global Institute study (2016) found that 65% of independent workers report higher stress levels compared to traditional employees. This instability negatively impacts their productivity, mental health, and financial security.

Lack of Social Security and Benefits for Gig Workers: A key challenge in the gig economy is the lack of health insurance, pension benefits, and paid leave. In India, gig workers are largely outside formal labor protections, making them vulnerable to financial shocks. Globally, countries like the UK and the US have introduced policies to address this, but similar efforts in India remain inadequate.

Flexible Work Improves Well-Being but Requires Better Structure: Research (Pawar & Kunte, 2022) shows that flexible work models, including remote and hybrid setups, improve worker satisfaction and work-life balance. However, the absence of standardized policies in the gig economy leads to exploitation, overwork, and burnout.

Digital Platforms Hold Significant Power Over Gig Workers: Companies like Uber, Zomato, and Swiggy control gig workers' earnings, work hours, and access to jobs through algorithmic management. Studies (Zuboff, 2019) highlight that digital surveillance and unpredictable algorithmic decision-making reduce autonomy and job satisfaction.

India's Gig Economy is Rapidly Expanding: According to NITI Aayog (2022), India had 7.7 million gig workers in 2020, projected to reach 23.5 million by 2030. This rapid expansion makes workplace well-being policies crucial for sustainable employment.

Legal and Policy Gaps in Worker Protection: Unlike formal employees, gig workers lack protection under India's current labor laws. The Code on Social Security, 2020, recognizes gig workers, but its implementation is weak, leaving many without essential benefits.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduce Comprehensive Well-Being Policies for Gig Workers: Organizations should develop structured well-being programs, including mental health support, insurance, and paid leave. Lessons can be taken from developed countries where gig platforms provide limited benefits.

Strengthen Labor Laws to Cover Gig Workers: The Indian government should implement and enforce social security schemes, such as pension plans and accident insurance, tailored for gig workers. Similar efforts have been effective in the EU and parts of the US.

Encourage Public-Private Partnerships for Social Security: Governments and gig economy platforms should collaborate to offer social security schemes. For instance, Swiggy in India has introduced limited accident insurance for delivery partners, which should be expanded industry-wide.

Ensure Fair Pay and Work Hours Through Regulation: Regulatory frameworks must mandate fair wages and protect against unpredictable work hours. For example, laws in California (AB5 law) classify certain gig workers as employees, providing them with added protections. A similar model should be explored in India.

Promote Financial Inclusion for Gig Workers: Government and private financial institutions should create tailored financial products, such as micro-loans and insurance policies, to help gig workers manage income instability. The RBI could introduce guidelines ensuring banks cater to gig economy workers.

Develop Mental Health Support Systems: Since gig workers face high stress levels, companies should provide free or subsidized mental health services, including counseling and wellness programs.

Encourage Digital Platforms to Adopt Ethical AI Practices: Algorithmic transparency should be mandated to prevent unfair job allocation, arbitrary deactivations, and biased decision-making by gig platforms. India can develop guidelines similar to the EU's AI regulation framework.

Enhance Skilling and Upskilling Initiatives: Government schemes like Skill India should integrate gig worker training programs, helping them transition into better-paying jobs within the digital economy.

Adopt Global Best Practices in Gig Worker Protection: Countries like Germany and the Netherlands provide minimum wage guarantees and collective bargaining rights for gig workers. India should explore similar worker-friendly models to ensure sustainable gig employment.

Encourage Unionization of Gig Workers: Forming associations or unions, such as the Indian Federation of App-Based Transport Workers (IFAT), should be supported to give gig workers a collective voice.

6. CONCLUSION

Workplace well-being is essential for organizational growth in the gig economy. Companies that invest in fair wages, healthcare, work-life balance, and career growth programs experience higher productivity and worker retention. While some organizations have begun implementing well-being initiatives, more comprehensive efforts are needed to create a sustainable gig workforce. The future of the gig economy depends on balancing business efficiency with worker welfare. Organizations must recognize that worker well-being is not just a social responsibility—it is a business necessity. India's gig economy is growing at an unprecedented rate, and worker well-being is critical to ensuring its sustainability. Policymakers, businesses, and civil society must work together to introduce fair labor practices, strengthen worker protections, and create an environment where gig work is both flexible and secure. By implementing these recommendations, India can set a global benchmark in gig economy regulation while improving the overall quality of life for millions of workers.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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