

**Classroom To Platforms:
Student Gig Workers in Davangere District.
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ABSTRACT:

The rapid growth of the gig economy has provided students with flexible employment opportunities that allow them to balance academic responsibilities with part-time income. While gig work offers financial independence and skill development, it also raises significant concerns regarding the mental health and well-being of student workers. This study explores the psychological implications of gig employment among students, focusing on stress, anxiety, depression, job insecurity, and work-life balance. Using a mixed-method approach, the research investigates how irregular working hours, lack of social security, and academic pressures collectively affects students' mental health. Findings highlight that although gig work helps reduce financial burdens, it often leads to heightened stress, fatigue, and reduced academic performance. A significant portion of respondents reported challenges in managing academic performance along with gig responsibilities, leading to emotional strain and reduced mental well-being. Many respondents reported difficulty balancing studies with work commitments, contributing to emotional exhaustion and reduced well-being. The study emphasizes the factors influencing to students to engage in gig work and job satisfaction along with their academic progress, benefit from the flexibility of the gig economy. By bridging education, employment and psychology, this research adds to the growing literature on student participation in the gig economy.

KEYWORDS:

Gig economy, student gig workers, mental stress, academic performance, institutional support.



Introduction:

Gig workers are individuals engaged in short-term, flexible, and task-based jobs rather than traditional full-time employment. In India, the gig economy has grown rapidly with the rise of digital platforms like Ola, Uber, Swiggy, Zomato, Urban Company, and freelancing portals. According to NITI Aayog, India had about 7.7 million gig workers in 2020–21, and this number is projected to reach 23.5 million by 2029–30. Gig work provides flexibility, additional income, and opportunities for youth, women, and students. However, gig workers often face challenges such as lack of social security, income instability, absence of formal contracts, and limited legal protection. Despite these issues, gig work is becoming an important source of livelihood and is reshaping India's future workforce.

Student gig workers are young individuals who engage in short-term, flexible, and freelance jobs while pursuing their education. With the rise of digital platforms and the gig economy, students now take up part-time roles such as food delivery, online tutoring, content creation, and freelance digital services. Gig work provides them with financial independence, practical experience, and flexibility to balance work with studies. However, it also brings challenges like irregular income, lack of job security, and risks to physical and mental well-being. Despite these issues, gig work is increasingly becoming a preferred option for students to support their education and gain work exposure.

Factors influencing students to engage in gig work:

1. Financial Need: To support tuition fees, living expenses, or personal spending.
2. Flexibility of Work: Ability to choose working hours that fit around academic schedules.
3. Skill Development: Opportunities to gain practical, technical, and soft skills.
4. Career Advancement: Enhances resumes and employability prospects.
5. Exposure & Networking: Interaction with clients, professionals, and industries.
6. Entrepreneurial Drive: Desire for independence, creativity, and self-reliance.
7. Interest in Technology: Digital platforms make it easy to find gigs.

8. Peer Influence: Friends or seniors already engaged in gig work.
9. Academic Flexibility: Part-time and project-based work aligns with semester schedules.
10. Opportunity to Explore Interests: Allows students to test career options before graduation.

The following sectors provide to students with flexibility, income, practical experience, skill development and helping them balance academics with work.

Sector /field	Type of work	Required skills
Education & Tutoring	Online / offline tutoring, assignment helping	Teaching, communication, subject expertise
Content creation	Blogging, video creation, social media	Creativity, digital skills, marketing
Technical field	Coding, web/app development, data entry	Technical skill, problem solving, coding
On demand service	Food /courier, logistics	Time management, customer service
Freelancing platforms	Up-work, fiverr, freelancer project	Client management, project execution
Hospitality & Events	Cafes, restaurants, event promotion	Team-work, multi-tasking, communication
Creative & media	Photography, video editing, animation	Creativity, technical media skills

Advantages of student gig workers:

- Financial independence: Students earn income to support tuition, living expenses, or personal needs.
- Flexibility: Gig work allows students to choose working hours that fit around their studies.
- Skill development: Provides practical experience, communication, technical, and problem-solving skills.
- Work exposure: Offers real-world industry insights and networking opportunities.
- Entrepreneurial mind set: Encourages self-reliance, creativity, and adaptability.

- Career advantage: Adds the value to resumes, increasing employability after graduation.

Disadvantages of student gig workers:

- Irregular income: Earnings are often inconsistent and unreliable.
- Lack of social security: No health insurance, paid leave, or retirement benefits.
- Time management issues: Balancing work with academics may cause stress and affect performance.
- Job insecurity: Work is temporary, with no guarantee of continuity.
- Exploitation risks: Delayed payments, low wages, or unfair treatment by clients/platforms.
- Impact on health: Long or odd working hours can affect physical and mental well-being.

Objectives of the study:

1. To study the influencing factors of students to engage in gig work.
2. To analyse the satisfaction of gig work of the students along with their academic activities.

Research methodology:

The study adopts a descriptive research design, aimed to understanding the nature, challenges, and impacts of gig workers among students. The design helps in collecting both quantitative and qualitative data to analyse the socio-economic conditions and experience of student gig workers. The study was set in the urban areas of Davangere. The respondents are selected by purposive sampling technique. This study contained structural interview schedule to obtain the information from the respondents. The sample size of the study was 40 student gig workers in different educational institutions. In the process of entire data collection we adhered to all research ethics. The respondents were fully informed about the researcher's objective.

Results:**a. Demographic Analysis:****1. Age and Gender of the respondents:**

Age (in years)	Gender		
	Male	Female	Total
Up to 18	3	2	5
18–20	6	4	10
20–22	8	5	13
22–25	8	4	12
Total	25	15	40

(Source: primary survey) Table 1.1

The table shows that the study included 40 participants in total, out of which 25 (62.5%) were male and 15 (37.5%) were female. The largest group of respondents belongs to the 20–22 years age group (32.5%). The smallest group is the up to 18 years category.

2. course and year of the study of the respondents:

Sl.No	Corse of the study	Year of the study				Total
		1 st year	2 nd year	3 rd year	Final year	
1	PUC	4	2	-	-	6
2	UG	3	4	5	-	12
3	PG	2	3	-	-	5
4	ENGG	3	2	4	2	11
5	Other	1	1	2	2	6
Total		13	12	11	4	40

Sl.No Corse of the study Year of the study Total

(Source: primary survey) Table.2

The table clearly tells that the survey sample is dominated by early-year students, with UG and engineering being the most common courses pursued. Out of the 40 respondents, the highest proportion are UG (30%), followed by ENGG students (27.5%), PUC and other courses constitute 15% each, while PG students from the smallest group of 12.5%. In terms of year of study the majority are first year students (32.5%), followed by second year students (30%) and third year students (27.5%). The final year has the least representation (10%).

b. Work profile of the respondents:

3. Reason for engaging in gig work and type of gig work of the respondents:

Sl. No	Reason for engaging in gig work	Type of gig work								Total
		Deliv-ery	Ride sharing	Free lancing	Tutor-ing	Graphic design	Data operator	Plumb-ing	Other home services	
1	To support education expenses	3	3	1	1	2	1	1	-	12
2	Family financial needs	2	1	1	-	-	3	2	1	10
3	Gain work experience	-	1	1	1	1	-	1	-	5
4	Extra income/pocket money	1	1	2	2	-	-		-	6
5	Other reason	2	1	1	-	2	-		1	7
Total		8	7	6	4	5	4	4	2	40

(Source: primary survey)

Table.3

The table analysis indicates that economic and educational needs are the primary reasons for the students engaging in gig work. Delivery and ride-sharing dominate as the most accessible job options, while free-lancing, tutoring and graphic design reflect skill-based choices. Overall, gig work serves as both a financial support system and a means of skill development for students.

4. working hours and monthly income from the gig work of the respondents:

Sl.No	Working hours per day	Monthly income from gig work			Total
		Up to 5	5-10	Above 10	
1	2-3	7	9	2	18
2	3-4	6	2	4	12
3	4<	2	6	2	10
Total		15	17	8	40

(Source: primary survey)

Table 1.4

The table shows that most of the students balance academics by limiting gig work to 2–3 hours daily, resulting in modest earnings. A small proportion who put in longer hours can earn higher, but they remain a minority.

5. Percieavance of Salary and Job Satisfaction of the respondents:

Job Satisfaction	Percieavance of Salary(in levels)			Total
	Lower Level	Real Level	High Level	
Satisfied	8	8	4	20
Not Satisfied	14	6	-	20
Total	22	14	4	40

(Source: primary Survey)

Table1.5

The above table shows that a balanced split between satisfied and not satisfied gig workers. However, dissatisfaction is strongly linked with the perception of low salary levels. On the other side, workers who perceive their salary as fair to report better job satisfaction.

6. IS GIG IS CHOICE TO BE CAREER

Options	No. of respondents	Percentage
Yes	14	35
No	16	40
Maybe	10	25
Total	40	100

(Source: primary survey)

Table 1.6

The above table shows that gig work has mixed acceptance as a career choice among respondents. While 35% view positively, 40% reject it as a long-term option, and 25% remain uncertain.

FINDINGS:

- The moderate age of 20–22 is more that of 32.5% from the all respondents the rest came with similar percentage. The student respondents are more and done with their preference.
- There are more male students of 62.5% and females are 37.5%.
- The students are in different parts of gig. The maximum of students do prefer with the online platforms and minimum students are en-

gaged in the contracts in the part of gig economy.

- The highlight of the role of gig jobs in helping students manages academic costs.
- Income perception plays a crucial role in shaping job satisfaction among student gig workers.
- Gig work provides opportunities, concerns about stability, security and growth prospects may discourage many from considering it as a full-time career.

Conclusion:

Student gig working has emerged as a significant trend in today's digital economy, offering young learners an opportunity to balance academics with part-time income. It provides flexibility, financial independence, skill development, and valuable industry exposure. However, challenges such as irregular income, job insecurity, and lack of social security must also be recognized. Overall, gig work can be a stepping stone for students' personal and professional growth if managed wisely and supported by proper regulations and institutional guidance.

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The Authors have no conflict of interest to declare that they are relevant to the content of this article.

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