

# A Study on Work-Life Balance of Gig Employees in Madurai City – With Special Reference To Food Deliverers

Ramakritinan Swathi Lakshmi\* and Thiruchelvi Arunachalam

Corresponding Author: \*Ramakritinan Swathi Lakshmi, Research Scholar, Department of Management Studies, Anna University, Chennai – 600 025, Tamil Nadu, INDIA; Email: [rswathilakshmi1991@gmail.com](mailto:rswathilakshmi1991@gmail.com)

**ABSTRACT:** In discussions about workplace gender equality, work-life balance is critical. The notion of work-life balance is widely used across various fields that research how work is linked with other aspects of life, as well as gender inequities in this area. The concept of work-life balance has been created in a variety of ways. The main concept stems from the achievement and amusement of the regions, both of which appear to be relatively simple. According to the above, work-life balance is a phenomenon that occurs when people are satisfied and functioning well at work and at home with minimal role conflict. Dealing with work timing and shifts is one of the major challenges of working in the hotel industry. This is especially noteworthy because the majority of people go out to enjoy themselves during holidays and festivals. Those are the busiest times for hospitality service professionals, and they will be unable to take any time off or vacation at that time. As expectations on the home front are disregarded, this obviously causes a component of life stability and family struggle. In the current situation, the vast majority of people appear to be employed, and these experiences have been linked to the first-class of labour both directly and indirectly. As a result of the contradiction between the needs of the work and non-painings domains, war is triggered, and humans suffer a loss of equilibrium in their lives. The fact that today's workers place a greater focus on work-life balance than their forefathers confirm this. Hence, the current study has been focused to give an analytical overview on the work-life balance of GIG employees in Madurai city with special reference to food deliverers.

**KEY WORD:** Hospitality, Life Stability, Disgrace, Work-life Balance, Lifestyle Balance, Challenges & Opportunities, Rule Notion and Depersonalization

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## I. INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Gig economy startups like Uber and DoorDash have historically fought laws in the United States and Europe that attempted to designate their gig workers as full-time employees eligible for social security benefits. Delivery drivers and cab drivers for Uber and DoorDash are considered contractual, part-time employees. In India, food aggregators and delivery services have taken a similar stance. According to Zomato's Red Herring Prospectus (RHP), the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) issued a legal notification in January 2020 accusing the company of "neglecting and dodging" payment of PF contributions to delivery partners. The EPFO also requested that Zomato categorise delivery partners as employees under the Employees' Provident Fund and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952, so that they can get social security benefits. This necessity, on the other hand, was contested by Zomato. Despite the fact that companies like Zomato have been fixated on the concept that delivery workers are not full-time employees, many of these gig workers have told that they consider it a full-time job.

In a developing country such as India, where unemployment is a huge issue, the majority of employees rely on the gig economy to make a living. Even if this job structure aids in the reduction of unemployment in a country, it is equally vital to have an opinion on such a structure and its long-term viability from the workers' perspective. Psychological needs are a critical component in determining the primary drivers of gig workers' performance. There has been a drastic change in the job structure all over the world as a result of technological advancements, increased demand for flexible work, and unemployment. From both the employer's and employees' perspectives, there are various advantages to this.

Fluid human capital, greater productivity, and cost savings for organisations are just a few of the advantages. Employees benefit from the gig economy since they can work on numerous projects at once, have more freedom and independence in terms of when and where they work, and can earn more money by working on multiple projects. Aside from the aforementioned advantages, one of the gig economy's primary goals has

been to reduce unemployment. Babysitters, musicians, truck drivers, artists, food delivery people, freelance programmers, and other gig economy jobs are just a few examples. Uncertainty, workers who are unreceptive to corporate culture, workers' compensation and protection, irregular working hours, and a lack of social contact are some of the issues that are linked with it.

**Warren, Tracey. (2021)** have done a paper and their review requests 'where are we' in the review from balance between serious and fun activities inside Industrial Relations and 'where to next' assuming that we are to distinguish switches for positive change in working environment sex uniformity as innovation brings the potential for smoothing or upsetting how ladies and men from various class bunches work and care. It begins by shining a classed lens on the mainstream work–life balance agenda in order to identify shortcomings in its heavy focus on time constraints highlighted by financially affluent middle-class workers and its ignoring of financial problems. The essay next explores the effects of the rise in gig labour on work–life balance, using a more sophisticated conceptualization. Gig work is marketed as providing flexibility and autonomy, allowing carers to work while caring for their loved ones, yet it is carried out without the safety nets that are more frequent in conventional employment. It can cause uncertainty in work hours and income, as well as job intensification and financial stress, all of which have an impact on work–life balance. 'Where to Next' is working on a more inclusive strategy that recognizes gender, class, and other sorts of diversity in order to achieve gender equality in the workplace for all.

**Keith, Melissa et al. (2020)** have summed up their work as regardless of far-reaching interest in the gig economy, scholarly exploration on the point has lingered behind. The current chapter uses organisational theory and research to provide a practical model for understanding how workers' health and well-being are affected by gig labour. This chapter, based on previous research, describes the gig economy in all of its forms and proposes a framework for understanding why people join it. Following that, we'll look at how different aspects of the gig economy and gig workers can be viewed as both demands and resources that affect how individuals experience gig labour. We draw on previous research on alternative work arrangements and entrepreneurship, as well as the little research on the gig economy, to better understand how these traits are likely to influence worker health and well-being. Finally, a study agenda is presented in order to stimulate much-needed research into the gig economy and its workers.

**Lehdonvirta, Vili. (2018)** have done a review and it expresses that the Gig economy stages appear to give outrageous worldly adaptability to laborers, giving them full command over how to go through every hour and moment of the day. When workers try to exercise this flexibility, what obstacles do they face? They examine three online piecework platforms with varied histories and worker demographics: Mechanical Turk, mobile works, and cloud factory, using 30 worker interviews and other data. Workers' power over scheduling is limited in practice due to structural restrictions (availability of employment and degree of worker dependence on the work), as well as cultural-cognitive constraints (procrastination and presentism). The severity of these restraints varies greatly amongst platforms, with the formally freest platform having the most structural and cultural-cognitive constraints. Workers have also evolved informal techniques, tools, and groups to manage these limits, according to the researchers. They suggest that evaluating flexible working arrangements by concentrating on outcomes rather than worker control is a more successful approach.

Every profession was aware of their specific responsibilities and worked diligently to meet them. Farmers, for example, supplied a consistent supply of food, carpenters provided tools for a variety of tasks, and architects designed the region's basis. However, there was no chance of finding work. Every tradesperson was a self-employed individual in some capacity. Everyone was a freelancer, from the priest to the blacksmith to the mason, working on small jobs before moving to cities to complete larger undertakings. The gig economy is still thriving in the twenty-first century, in the year 2021, and has shown to be a driving factor in influencing the future of the Indian economy. According to a BCG analysis, the gig economy has the potential to provide 90 million employment (approximately 30 percent of India's non-farm labour), contribute 1.25 percent to GDP, and create millions of new jobs across all sectors of the Indian economy.

What distinguishes such a gig-based relationship is its one-of-a-kind trait. It promotes one-of-a-kind employment interactions that go beyond any conventional metric. Traditional working techniques are eliminated in a number of ways, the most important of which is the removal of the employer-employee divide. The transaction is also fascinating because of the flexibility they have in terms of desired operations and the hours they choose to devote. Businesses benefit from the same flexibility because they are not reliant on loyal personnel, allowing them to save money on set salary and social security benefits. Multiple urban platforms that promote chances for gig specialists who want to stay ahead of the curve by questioning the status quo are helping to propel such a work economy forward. We may claim that 'Tech' is finally being utilised to magnify good, based on the way the 'gig economy' is gaining traction. It is developing a streamlined paradigm for providing and distributing equal chances for all people.

## 1.2 Research Objectives

The current study has been associated following objectives (1) To know about Indian GIG economy, (2) To analyse various factors associated with the study and (3) To discuss and suggest for the perfect work-life balance of the respondents (food deliverers) from the study conducted.

## 1.3 Research Methodology and Data Analysis

Current study has been done with 100 sample respondents (food deliverers) from the study area (Table-1). Structured questionnaire was distributed among them, data collected and properly analyzed as follows:

**Table 1:** Socio-Demographic Analysis of the Respondents

Basis	Classification	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Gender	Male	70	70
	Female	30	100
		<b>100</b>	
Age	Below 30 years	32	32
	31 – 40 years	25	57
	41 – 50 years	23	80
	Above 50 years	20	100
		<b>100</b>	
Marital Status	Married	48	48
	Unmarried	52	100
		<b>100</b>	
Education	Up to HSC	20	20
	Under-Graduation	31	51
	Post-Graduation	12	63
	Diploma	18	81
	Others	19	100
		<b>100</b>	
Experience	Below 3 years	36	36
	3 – 6 years	42	78
	Above 6 years	22	100
		<b>100</b>	
Salary	Below Rs. 10,000	38	38
	Rs. 10,001 – Rs. 15,000	29	67
	Rs. 15,001 – Rs. 20,000	23	90
	Above Rs. 20,000	10	100
		<b>100</b>	
Work Nature	Day Shift	39	39
	Night Shift	25	64
	Mid-time Shift	36	100
		<b>100</b>	

Source: Primary data

## 1.4 Findings and Interpretation

**Table 2:** Analysis on the Basic Need of the Respondents in their Work Situation (As a food deliverer)

Basic Needs	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
The requirements for health and safety (protection from ill health and injury at work and outside of work, and the enhancement of good health)	20	20
Needs related to finances and family (pay, job security and other family needs)	25	45
Needs in the community (collegiality at work and leisure time away from work)	22	67
Self-confidence is essential (recognition and appreciation of work within the organisation and outside the organisation)	12	79
Actualization requirements (realising one's potential as a professional and inside the organisation)	10	89
It is necessary to have knowledge (learning to enhance job and professional skills)	5	94
Needs in terms of appearance (creativity at work as well as personal creativity and general aesthetics)	6	100

Source: Primary data

**Table 3:** Analysis on the Significant Relationship between Work Nature and Basic Needs of Respondents (Food Deliverer)– ANOVA Test

Work Nature	f' Ratio	ANOVA	Significance Level
Day Shift	0.235	2.561	NS
Night Shift	0.243	2.592	NS
Mid-time Shift	0.672	2.318	NS

Source: Primary Data (\*Significance at 5% level)

**Table 4:** Analysis on the Factors associated with Lack in Work-Life Balance

(SA – Strongly Agree; A – Agree; PA – Probably Agree; DA – Disagree and SDA – Strongly Disagree)

Factors	SA	A	PA	DA	SD A
Traveling to and from work is difficult.	10	20	28	19	23
Due to employment, I'm unable to attend family events.	20	18	38	20	4
Due to work obligations, I spend less time with my family.	15	25	29	16	15
My employer provides counselling services to help me combine my professional and personal lives.	29	20	27	16	8
My employer allows me to work from home on a part-time basis.	24	26	30	13	7
Allowing me to effectively manage my family's demands thanks to allowance benefits	20	29	27	14	10
My company's leave policy meets my requirements.	21	29	20	10	20
As a result of my profession, I'm dealing with stress-related illnesses.	16	28	29	24	3

*Source: Primary Data*

**Table 5:** Analysis on the Socio-Demographic Factors and Work-Life Balance of the Respondents – *CHI-SQUARE Analysis*

Null Hypotheses have been framed with the Socio-Demographic Factors and Work-life Balance of the Respondents. And it has been verified by following table:

Variables	Calculated Value	Tabulated Value	Status of the Result
Gender	10.13	7.815	Failed to accept the Null Hypothesis ( <i>Rejected</i> )
Age	0.58	7.815	Accepted the Null Hypothesis
Marital Status	0.78	7.815	Accepted the Null Hypothesis
Education	5.78	7.815	Accepted the Null Hypothesis
Experience	12.20	7.815	Failed to accept the Null Hypothesis ( <i>Rejected</i> )
Salary	6.784	7.815	Accepted the Null Hypothesis

*Source: Primary Data (\*Significance at 5% level)*

### Debate and Recommendations

A fast-food restaurant revolution is taking on in India right now. People used to assess how much it would cost to create a chicken dish at home (rather than eating out at a restaurant) and then do so. Well-heeled Indians are more inclined to go out these days. With a population of roughly 1.1 billion people and a burgeoning middle class, India promises a significant long-term growth opportunity for fast food. The people's food patterns are shifting. If both the husband-and-wife work, by the time they get home from work, the wife is too tired to prepare meals for the family, leading to a preference for fast food. As a result, fast food retailers proliferate and expand. Eating out has evolved from a trend to a weekend ritual. Furthermore, most city dwellers choose to eat out since they lack domestic support. The middle-class mindset has shifted dramatically as a result of the country's socioeconomic changes. They anticipate having a wide range of options. While fast food is preferred, fast food establishments are also prepared to serve both traditional and western cuisine. Advertisements are luring professionals, executives, and even youngsters to go out for fast food.

During the weeks when Zomato and Swiggy faced a barrage of criticism on social media from both delivery employees and netizens, Zomato chose to reply by investing in TV commercials starring prominent Bollywood stars Hrithik Roshan and Katrina Kaif. Activists and several internet users slammed the commercial, accusing Zomato TV of being unconcerned about the challenges that gig workers face. This caused the corporation to release a lengthy statement in order to put the matter to rest. The study's primary conclusions were discovered through the examination and interpretation of data provided by the participants. The following are some of the recommendations drawn from the study for the respondents (food deliverers) to achieve the ideal work-life balance:

- Food-delivery management should assess the difficulties surrounding their employees' WLB and develop and implement procedures to address the problem.
- The organisation should concentrate on implementing WLB-related employment practices that have a higher impact on increasing employee productivity.
- The main causes of poor WLB among hotel employees are long and stressful working hours and a shortage of labour. These dissatisfactions need to be addressed.
- Poor WLB of food delivery staff is caused by scheduling problems and the pressure of various jobs, which should be addressed by management as well.
- The food delivery sector is concerned with employee WLB, yet the steps in place to improve the situation are ineffective. To address these complaints, management should take appropriate measures.

- WLB-related employment practices are considered as the most important based on their capacity to increase employee productivity among respondents. It must also be corrected.
- Giving fair recognition and rewarding excellent work not only helps increase job satisfaction and reduce workplace stress, but it also helps reduce employee turnover. Compensation for services performed by employees is one of the most important HR factors. As a result, it is proposed that employee compensation be fair and just. The principle of equal remuneration for equal work must be followed. The hotel business needs to take a hard look at the pay that is paid to frontline, supervisory, and middle management cadres, as it is comparably low in comparison to other industries.
- Employee turnover is influenced by a variety of factors, including work culture and working environment. It should be the goal of the workplace culture to make employees feel at ease. Workplaces should be friendly and cooperative. Employees must be given a fair opportunity to speak up and provide comments at all times. A nice work environment and a healthy work culture make a big impact in an employee's decision to stay with the company.
- Organizations in the hotel business should invest in staff learning and development, according to this suggestion. Employees must be enticed to pursue further education and expand their knowledge. In addition, training programmes for increasing customer service, management abilities, and cultural training should be done.
- Mentoring not only reduces employee turnover but also enhances new workers' skills, resulting in increased production, according to research. To attain a low employee turnover rate, Google has successfully implemented mentorship.

Gig platforms will continue to thrive and serve as the technical resource power grids for the global stage in the future of the Bharat we live in today. Based on current trends, the country will be at the forefront of technology, labour, and skills. The gig economy has been growing and is predicted to outperform pre-pandemic forecasts due to the expected flood of gig workers switching from full-time jobs. While the government has taken the first measures to safeguard gig workers' social security, the 'Code on Social Security' still has to be refined. The option to subtract 5% from the amount owed to gig workers, for example, should be optional (based upon income brackets). Such deductions would not be acceptable because most gig workers, particularly delivery executives and drivers, are already experiencing lower income levels as a result of COVID-19. Furthermore, under the Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana, and Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana, all platform workers shall be provided with required coverage. This can be facilitated by employer firms, which will ensure employee protection, ensuring a long-term gig economy.

In this fast-paced environment, business organisations, particularly in the service industry, have become extremely demanding. Customer expectations in terms of comfort and breadth of services have risen substantially, fueled further by severe rivalry in the business. As a result, meeting client demands has become increasingly difficult for employees, resulting in increased job pressure. This stress manifests itself in multitasking and longer work hours, causing emotional and physical strain and, eventually, a work-life balance. If the imbalance is not addressed, it can lead to employee discontent with their jobs, increased stress, and ultimately a job moves. It has been proven that a better work-life balance among food deliverers leads to higher job satisfaction. There is apparently a link between WLB and job stress. Even when WLB improves, occupational stress is still significant. The sole explanation for this phenomenon is that the food deliverers have made attempts to improve the WLB; nonetheless, it is possible that the heavy work load on staff in all departments is contributing to high workplace stress.

It's also been established that there's a link between work-life balance and employee turnover. Employee turnover is reduced to some extent when work-life balance is achieved. Employee turnover, on the other hand, is influenced by the fact that there has been a boom in the food delivery sector, with a huge number of new food delivery companies recruiting employees by providing greater pay and more rewarding work experiences. Increasing pay and benefits will undoubtedly aid in the consolidation of relationships with employees and the reduction of employee turnover. Nonetheless, it is critical to improve the working environment and reduce employee workloads in order to assist them find a balance between their work and personal and social obligations. Staff development, recognition and reward for excellent performance, and mentoring are all initiatives that will assist boost employee morale. As a result, work-life balance and job satisfaction will increase, as well as workplace stress and staff turnover.

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