

The Influence of Arts Education on Creativity, Critical Thinking, and Emotional Well-Being among Students

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ABSTRACT

The rise of the gig and platform economy has significantly changed the nature of work in India as well as in many other parts of the world. Digital platforms providing services such as food and courier delivery, ride-hailing, home-based care, and online freelancing have opened new income avenues and are often promoted as flexible employment options. However, for many women engaged in this sector, the reality is far more complex. Their work is marked by unstable earnings, lack of social security, unclear employment status, and very limited access to formal mechanisms for resolving workplace issues. These challenges are further shaped by social expectations around unpaid household responsibilities, mobility restrictions, and safety concerns associated with late-hour or field-based work.

Alongside economic vulnerability, women gig workers increasingly report facing various forms of digital abuse. Instances of online harassment, stalking, threatening messages, derogatory ratings, misuse of personal information, and safety risks during customer interactions have become common. This growing digital violence adds a serious layer of insecurity to an already precarious form of work.

Despite these issues, current Indian labour legislation including the Labour Codes of 2020 does not fully recognise the status or rights of platform-based workers. Similarly, existing digital safety mechanisms are inadequate in addressing the unique risks faced by women in gig work. This paper explores the intersection between labour rights and digital safety, highlighting the urgent need for gender-responsive regulation, stronger social security protections, and effective systems to prevent and address digital violence against women gig workers.

Keywords: Gig economy, women workers, labour regulation, digital harassment, workplace safety, labour rights.

I. INTRODUCTION

The nature of work has undergone an intense transformation with the boom of the gig and platform across the world. With the advancement in digital technology, data-driven management systems and mobile connectivity, the scope of platform-mediated labour have increased, where work will be organised with the help of digital interfaces and not by traditional employer-employee relationships. Nowadays, service based works such as riding, food or other delivery, domestic and care works are operated through the platforms that match the workers with the customers who are in need. As a result, platform-based work has become a vital source of livelihood for a growing segment of the workforce, but it still remains largely unregulated.

The participation of women in the gig and platform economy has been increasing gradually in recent periods. Women who are facing more barriers to the format of employment due to mobility constraints and social norms has shifted towards the digital platforms, since it appears to be more

flexible and also provides easy access to enter into the current labour market. Despite of this , platform-based workers especially women are more vulnerable to unstable earnings, absence of employment security, lack of social protections and limited bargaining power. These challenges further intensified the pre-existing gender based inequalities in the labour market.

Outside of economic uncertainty, women gig workers face a different kind of uncertainty stemming from the digital and consumer-facing nature of platform work. Women committed in ride-hailing, delivery, or home-based services are often required to interact with clients in alien settings, often without safety nets. Meanwhile, digital platforms uncover them to online harassment, discriminatory rating systems, misuse of personal data and algorithmic forms of control that are hard to grasp and difficult to question. These experiences reflect a rising trend of digital violence, which functions by the convergence of technology, gender and labour relations.

The core purpose of this study is to explore the labour rights challenges and digital safety issues faced by women in gig and platform economy. And also to check how well regulatory frameworks work in addressing these problems. This study tries to figure out the legal status of women gig workers under India Laws, to check out the scope of labour rights and social security benefits that they can access, to examine the essence and effect of digital harassment and platform-mediated workplace risks and finally underscore the importance of gender-responsive regulatory interventions harmony with constitutional principles of equality and dignity.

The paper adopts a doctrinal and analytical research methodology. It is based on the analysis of statutory provisions, specifically the Labour Codes of 2020, relevant judicial precedents, policies and reports of officials and available academic literature. The study mainly focuses on the Indian legal and regulatory context, with scant coverage of international standards and comparative practices. The study is subject to certain limitations, especially its dependence on secondary sources and the lack of empirical field data, which may limit the understanding into real-life experience of women gig workers across multiple fields.

LABOUR RIGHTS AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK GOVERNING WOMEN GIG WORKERS IN INDIA

Indian Labour laws have traditionally been methodical around the usual employer–employee relationship, founded on stable, full-time employment. This model offers significant obstacles to gig and platform-based work, specifically for women workers whose participation is mounded by unofficial tone, versatility and structural flaw. The enlargement of the gig economy has therefore demanded a reconsideration of Labour jurisprudence to identify whether legal mechanisms properly protect women participating in non-traditional work models.

A major transition took place with the execution of the Labour Codes, 2020, which first-ever legally sanctioned gig and platform workers within statutory law. The Code on Social Security, 2020 explains “gig worker” and “platform worker” as persons functioning outside the traditional employer–employee relationship while offering services through digital marketplaces. This authentication indicator marks a significant move away from previous Labour regulations that primarily omit such workers. Though, the authentication remains minimal, as gig workers are restricted as employees or workers among other labour codes. As an alternative, they are deemed as a unique group eligible merely for specific welfare

measures, with the outcome of partial coverage and continued omission from keylabour rights.

Shield relating to wages remains generally unreachable to women gig workers. The Code on Wages, 2019 expands guards such as minimum wages and equal remuneration merely to workers within formal employment relationships. Thus, women gig workers persist outside statutory wage protections, even though being centralized in poorly compensated and empathetic platform work. Platforms preserve discretion to determine wages through vague algorithms and boosters, threatening income security and constitutional commitments to decent conditions of work.

The Code on Social Security, 2020 endeavors to handle welfare problems by enabling government-funded social security schemes for gig and platform workers, including health and old-age protection. Nevertheless, these provisions refrain from guaranteed benefits and depend wholly on administrative choice. For women gig workers, this results in unpredictable reach to social security, further undermined by the absence of compulsory deductions from platforms.

Gender-based safeguards are inadequate. The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 covers merely to women in recognised employment relationships, omitting women gig workers from statutory maternity benefits. This gap hits harder to women who lean on gig work during pregnancy phases, enhancing economic uncertainty and compromising equality and dignity. In a similar vein, workplace safety laws offer inadequate safeguard. The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013 infers a physical workplace and recognizable employer, making its application to platform-based work unclear. Hence Women gig workers deal with elevated risks with lacking successful grievance redressal mechanisms.

Regardless of official validation, the legal framework persists to avoid elucidating the employment status of gig workers, granting platforms to bypass accountability. The non-existence of collective bargaining rights, dispute resolution mechanisms, and algorithmic transparency furtherance fortifies vulnerability. On the whole, while slow advancement has been made, the existing framework persists lacking to secure meaningful labour rights for women gig workers.

DIGITAL VIOLENCE AND PLATFORM-MEDIATED WORKPLACE RISKS

The extension of platform-based work has remodeled workplaces by transferring Labour into cyber environments. While platforms have produced new income opportunities, they have also produced forms of abuse that are off-topic to

conventional labour and criminal law. One such growing issue is **digital violence**, which relates to technology-enabled practices that imperil workers' safety, dignity, and autonomy. For women gig workers, digital violence comes up at the convergence of gender inequality, freelance work, and irregular platform power, making it a vital labour rights issue over purely a cybercrime concern.

In relation to platform work, digital violence embraces harassment, surveillance, coercion, and discrimination eased by digital technologies and platform design. Not like traditional workplace violence, these harms are usually indirect and inserted within platform architectures. Algorithms, customer feedback systems, and data practices jointly impact working conditions, producing digital violence systematic rather than segmented. Women gig workers encounter several forms of digital harassment such as online abuse and digital stalking that threaten their dignity and safety. Inadequate data protection operations facilitate chronic harassment and, in some cases, real-world tracking.

Unfair **rating and feedback mechanisms** further worsen vulnerability. Even though presented as neutral performance tools, customer ratings usually mirror gender bias and ethical views. Women may be held accountable for denying unsafe requests or failing to adapt to expectations of emotional labour. Given that ratings impact work allocation and income, these systems serve as instruments of veiled punishment. Women who refuse unsafe tasks, or challenge toxic actions may be algorithmically underprivileged. The shortage of accountability solidifies inequality while refusing workers meaningful options of opposition.

Digital violence often translates into physical and psychological harm. The collective impact of digital violence raises fundamental care regarding dignity and equality at work. Deciphering digital violence as a **workplace risk** rather than a tech-related problem is essential for moving forward labour rights and gender justice. Without labour-law-based measures and platform accountability, platform-mediated work risks replicating ingrained patterns of gender-based misuse under the form of creativity.

LEGAL MECHANISMS ADDRESSING DIGITAL HARASSMENT AND SAFETY

The growing dependence on digital platforms as sites of work has emphasized worries relating to online safety and legal accountability. In India, legal remedies to digital harassment have mainly progressed within cyber law, criminal law, and information technology regulation, instead of labour jurisprudence. Although these systems offer

restricted coverage counter to digital mistreatment, their ability to tackle platform-mediated workplace harassment encountered by women gig workers remains scattered.

The primary legislation regulating online conduct is the **Information Technology Act, 2000**, which manages virtual exchanges and cybercrimes. Particular clauses handling illicit access, identity theft, and wrongful use of electronic data may be triggered where women gig workers face digital exploitation or unauthorised propagation of personal information through platforms. Additionally, the Indian Penal Code, 1860 (IPC) now **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS)** contains provisions addressing criminal menace, stalking, pornography, and sexual harassment. Nonetheless, these provisions were prepared for traditional interpersonal interactions and do not properly account for the power discrepancies implanted in platform-mediated work.

Regardless of its applicability, the IT Act undergoes systemic restrictions when applied to digital harassment in gig work. It fails to acknowledge digital harassment as a workplace issue, nor does it impose positive duties on platforms to avert or react to abuse faced by workers. The intermediary liability regime under Section 79 prioritises safeguarding platforms from blame in place of ensuring worker protection, as upheld in judicial interpretation. Additionally, the grievance redressal mechanisms under the **Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021** are content-driven and user-friendly, focusing on content removal of unlawful material rather than institutional harassment, unfair ratings, or algorithmic penalties influencing women gig workers.

In reality, women gig workers bump into big obstacles in utilizing existing solutions. Documenting digital harassment entails lengthy procedures, including cybercrime complaints, evidence preservation, and engagement with law enforcement. For workers short on formal employment status organizational help, these processes are oppressive and dismaying. Platform-based grievance systems further compound this problem, as internal complaint mechanisms are mostly obscure, automated, and discretionary, with narrow room for appeal. Fear of revenge through deactivation or loss of work further discourages reporting.

A serious flaw in the current legal authority is the lack of platform-specific accountability model acknowledging gig work as labour. Cyber laws keep handling women gig workers as internet users rather than workers qualified to safe working conditions. In contrast to traditional workplaces,

platform-based work is short on legislative shields such as employer liability for third-party harassment or mandatory internal complaints committees. Consequently, women gig workers remain situated within policy void.

On the whole, ongoing legal mechanisms function in barriers and overlook the continuous, computationally mediated nature of digital violence in gig work. Tackling these impacts demands a shift from user-centric cyber regulation to worker-centric legal frameworks that recognise platform-mediated abuse as a labour rights issue and inflict genuine oversight on platforms.

II. SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The unstable working conditions and amplified threat to digital violence faced by women gig workers call for detailed and gender-sensitive reforms. Such reforms must function across legal, policy, and institutional levels to guarantee that platform-based work sustains labour dignity, equality, and safety.

1. Legal Recognition of Women Gig Workers

A significant overhaul measure is the obvious legal validation of gig and platform workers within labour legislation. Ongoing frameworks repeatedly organize gig workers as independent contractors, omitting them from primary labour protections. Statutory recognition of gig workers as a unique group, with minimum secured rights, would help address this coverage gap. This recognition must directly account for gender-specific exposures faced by women gig workers, including income instability, unpaid care responsibilities, and exposure to online harassment.

2. Strengthening Labour Rights and Fair Working Conditions

Labour rights for women gig workers should be fortified through mandatory norms on minimum earnings, reasonable working hours, transparency in algorithmic management, and availability of effective grievance redressal mechanisms. Platforms should be required to share how ratings, incentives, and penalties are decided, as vague algorithms often disadvantage women unevenly. Gender-sensitive audits of platform practices can enhance protection fairness, non-discrimination, and accountability in work allocation and performance appraisal.

3. Expansion of Social Security Coverage

Broadening social security reach is crucial for women engaged in gig work. Policies should assure access to health insurance, maternity benefits, disability coverage, and old-age security. A

collaborative responsibility involving the State, platforms, and workers may provide a friendly framework. Special spotlight must be placed on maternity and care giving-related benefits, given the structural hurdles women face in balancing paid work with unremunerated care responsibilities.

III. CONCLUSION

In the United Kingdom, judicial oversight has broadened labour safeguards for gig workers. In **Uber BV v. Aslam**, The Supreme Court acknowledged ride-hailing drivers as “workers” have a claim to statutory benefits, rejecting contractual classifications that muddled platform control. Although the judgment did not directly focus on gender-specific issues, it demonstrates the role of deliberate explanation in protecting exposed workers. Spain’s “Rider Law” similarly groups delivery platform workers as employees and demands algorithmic transparency, addressing both labour security and digital control.

Similar situations emphasize key lessons for India, employment status should contemplate the real deal of platform control; algorithmic transparency is key to prevent bias; and labour protections must be supplemented by gender-responsive social security measures. Overall, international practices showcase the want for a combined framework combining labour law, digital governance, and gender justice to ensure dignity and security for women gig workers.

This paper has scrutinized the structural weaknesses proficient by women gig workers, highlighting the meeting point of labour insecurity and digital violence in platform-mediated work. While the gig economy provides versatility and employment opportunities, it also boosts informalisation, weak labour protections, and gendered inequalities. Digital violence materializing through harassment, surveillance, algorithmic bias, and customer exploitation has popped up as a notable occupational hazard for women in platform work.

There is an immediate want for regulatory intervention that puts first workers’ rights and integrity over market-driven narratives. Gender-sensitive legal recognition, enhanced labour rights, augmented social security reach, and effective mechanisms to handle digital violence are fundamental to ensure solid equality. Lacking such reforms, the gig economy risks duplicating existing social and economic inequalities in digital form. Guaranteeing dignity and protection for women gig workers is thus not merely a compulsory labour policy in addition to a broader question of social justice and constitutional values.

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