

Socio-Economic Security and Working Conditions of Platform Workers in the Gig Economy: An Empirical Study of Anand City

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Abstract

The gig economy is transforming employment through flexible, technology-enabled work opportunities. This study examines the socio-economic status, working conditions, and challenges of platform workers in Anand City, Gujarat. Primary data were collected from 30 platform workers through structured questionnaires and personal interviews in 2026 and analyzed using frequency, percentage, and average methods. The findings show that most workers are young males, with nearly 70% earning ₹10,000–₹20,000 per month and over 76% depending entirely on platform work. Financial and social-security vulnerabilities are significant, with 60% reporting loans or debts, 63.33% receiving no employment-related benefits, and over 83% unaware of government welfare schemes. Moreover, 43.33% work more than 10 hours daily. The study highlights the need for stronger social protection, welfare awareness, skill development, and improved working conditions to ensure secure and sustainable livelihoods for platform workers.

Keywords: Gig Economy, Platform Workers, Social Security, Working Conditions.

Introduction

The rapid advancement of digital technology, internet connectivity, and smartphone penetration has transformed the nature of employment across the world. One of the most significant developments in recent years is the emergence of the Gig Economy, a labor market characterized by short-term, flexible, and task-based employment arrangements. In the gig economy, workers are engaged on a temporary or contractual basis rather than through traditional employer-employee relationships. Digital platforms such as food delivery, ride-hailing, logistics, home services, and e-commerce have become major sources of employment opportunities for millions of workers. In India, the gig economy has witnessed remarkable growth due to increasing urbanization, digitalization, rising consumer demand for on-demand services, and the expansion of platform-based companies. According to the report India's Booming Gig and Platform Economy published by NITI Aayog, India had approximately 7.7 million gig workers in 2020-21, and this number is expected to increase to 23.5 million by 2029-30. Gig workers are projected to constitute a significant share of the non-agricultural workforce in the coming years. Platform workers are an important segment of the gig economy. They obtain work through digital platforms such as ride-sharing, food delivery, courier services, home maintenance services, and online freelancing applications. Companies like Uber, Ola, Swiggy, Zomato, Rapido, Porter, and Urban Company have created new employment opportunities, particularly for youth, migrants, and semi-skilled workers.

These platforms provide flexibility in working hours and relatively easy entry into the labor market. However, concerns have emerged regarding income instability, long working hours, lack of social security, occupational risks, algorithmic control, and limited bargaining power of workers. The socio-economic conditions of platform workers have become an important area of academic and policy discussion. Although platform work offers employment opportunities, many workers face challenges such as fluctuating earnings, absence of health insurance, lack of pension benefits, job insecurity, and inadequate legal protection. Recent studies and policy reports have highlighted the need for better welfare measures and social security frameworks for gig workers in India. Anand City, as an emerging educational, commercial, and service centre in Gujarat, has experienced a significant increase in platform-based services. The growing presence of food delivery services, ride-hailing applications, and logistics platforms has created employment opportunities for many urban workers. However, limited empirical research has been conducted to examine the socio-economic conditions of platform workers in Anand City. Understanding their income levels, working conditions, employment security, social protection, and overall quality of life is essential for developing appropriate labor policies and welfare measures.

Against this background, the present study entitled “Socio-Economic Security and Working Conditions of Platform Workers in the Gig Economy: An Empirical Study of Anand City” seeks to examine the socio-economic characteristics, employment patterns, income levels, working conditions, challenges, and welfare status of platform workers in Anand City. The findings of the study will contribute to the growing literature on gig work and provide policy insights for improving the livelihoods and working conditions of platform workers.

Review of Literature:

Berg et al. (2018) in the ILO report *Digital Labour Platforms and the Future of Work: Towards Decent Work in the Online World* examined working conditions on major digital labour platforms across 75 countries. The study found that platform workers experienced irregular employment, low earnings, lack of social protection, and work-life balance issues. The report emphasized the need for regulatory measures to ensure decent work standards in platform-based employment.

International Labour Organization (2021) in its flagship report *The Role of Digital Labour Platforms in Transforming the World of Work* analysed the impact of digital platforms on labour markets worldwide. The study observed that platform work offers flexibility and employment opportunities but simultaneously creates challenges related to worker rights, social security, wage protection, and employment classification.

NITI Aayog (2022) in its report *India’s Booming Gig and Platform Economy: Perspectives and Recommendations on the Future of Work* highlighted the rapid expansion of the gig economy in India. The report estimated that the number of gig workers would increase significantly by 2030 and recommended measures such as social security coverage, skill development, financial inclusion, and improved working conditions for platform workers.

Indian Express (2022) discussed the recommendations of NITI Aayog regarding the future of gig work in India. The study emphasized the need for policy interventions to improve participation among women and marginalized groups and suggested fiscal incentives for platforms adopting inclusive employment practices.

International Labour Organization (2024) in its report *Expansion of the Gig and Platform Economy in India* examined the growth of platform-based employment and the emerging challenges faced by workers. The report found that while the sector generates substantial employment opportunities, workers often remain outside traditional labour protection mechanisms. The study recommended stronger institutional support and social dialogue among stakeholders.

Telangana Gig and Platform Workers Union Study (2025) investigated the working conditions of gig workers in Hyderabad. The findings revealed frequent account suspensions, weak grievance redressal systems, inadequate insurance coverage, and a lack of emergency support mechanisms. Workers demanded greater transparency in earnings, improved social security benefits, and stronger legal protections.

Suvarnapathaki et al. (2025) examined invisible labour among food delivery workers in India. Through qualitative interviews, the study found that waiting time, repetitive digital interactions, and algorithmic management created significant stress and uncertainty for workers. The authors argued that platform systems often reduce worker autonomy while increasing work intensity.

Parliamentary Standing Committee Report (2026) highlighted the growing importance of gig workers in India and recommended mandatory registration, social security coverage, accident insurance, and clearer legal responsibilities for platform companies. The report recognized the vulnerability of platform workers due to the absence of comprehensive labour protections.

Research Gap:

The reviewed literature primarily focuses on the growth of the gig economy, working conditions, labor rights, social security, and policy frameworks at the national and international levels. Most studies are concentrated in metropolitan cities such as Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Hyderabad. Limited empirical research is available on the socio-economic conditions of platform workers in medium-sized urban centres of Gujarat, particularly Anand City. Therefore, the present study seeks to fill this gap by providing a detailed analysis of the socio-economic conditions, employment patterns, income levels, and challenges faced by platform workers in Anand City.

Research Problem:

The rapid growth of the gig economy has created new employment opportunities through digital platforms such as Uber, Ola, Swiggy, and Zomato. While platform work offers flexibility and income-generating opportunities, workers often face challenges such as income instability, long working hours, lack of social security, and job insecurity.

Despite the increasing number of platform workers in Anand City, limited research has been conducted on their socio-economic conditions and welfare. Therefore, this study aims to examine the socio-economic status, working conditions, income levels, and challenges faced by platform workers in Anand City.

Objectives of the study:

- To examine the socio-economic profile of platform workers in Anand City.
- To assess the employment patterns, income levels, and working conditions of platform workers engaged in the gig economy in Anand City.
- To identify the major challenges faced by platform workers and evaluate their access to social security and welfare benefits.
- To offer policy suggestion for platform workers.

Research Methodology:

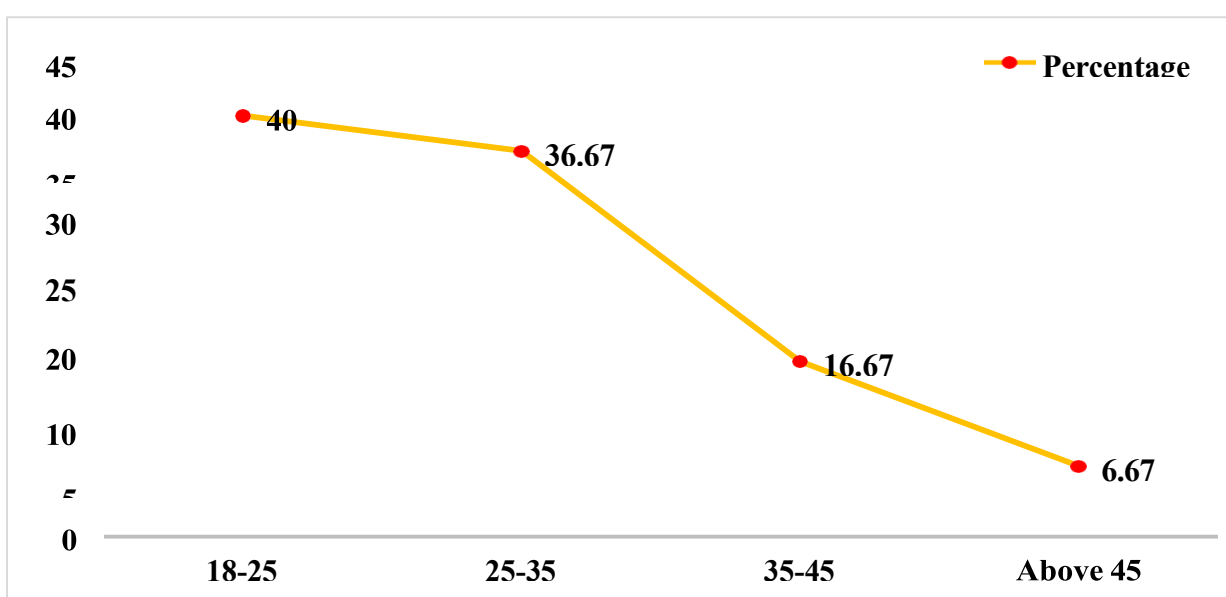
The study is based on primary data collected from platform workers in Anand City through a structured questionnaire and personal interviews. The study area comprises Anand City under the Municipal Corporation of Anand, Gujarat. A sample of 30 platform workers was selected using the convenience sampling method. The collected data were analysed using simple statistical tools such as frequency, percentage, and average. Graphs and pie charts were used for the presentation and interpretation of data. The primary survey was conducted during the year 2026 in Anand City.

The study focuses on examining the socio-economic conditions, employment characteristics, income levels, working conditions, and challenges faced by platform workers engaged in the gig economy in Anand City.

1. Data analysis and interpretation:

Demographic and family details:

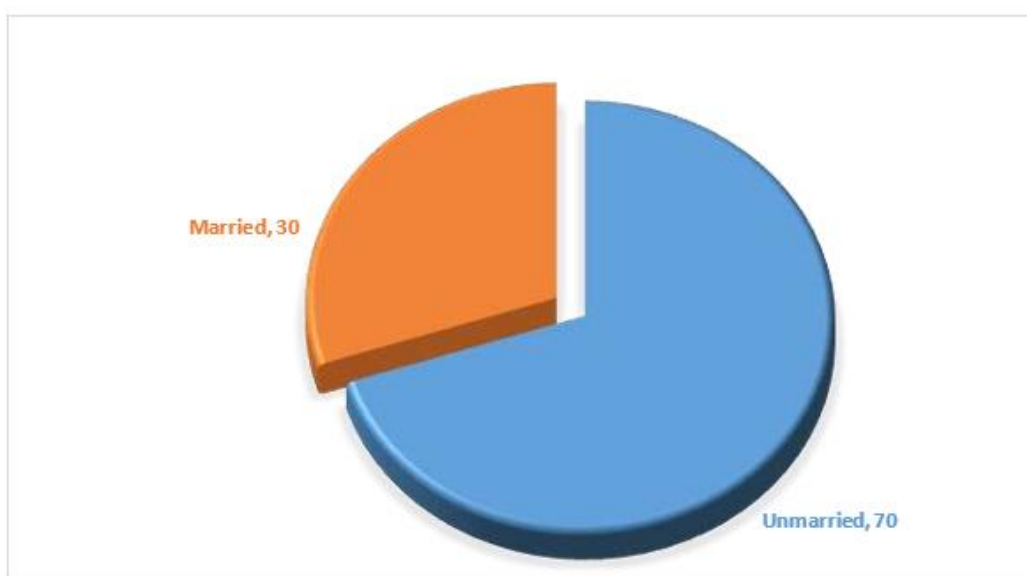
Figure 1 Distribution of Age Group of respondent:



The above Figure 1 shows that most platform workers are young. The 18–25 years age group forms the largest share (40%), followed by 25–35 years (36.67%). Together, they account for 76.67% of the respondents. The 35–45 years group represents 16.67%, while only 6.67% are above 45 years. This suggests that older workers are less involved in platform-based jobs, possibly due to lower digital familiarity, alternative employment options, or preference for traditional work.

Overall, the figure clearly reveals that platform work is predominantly attractive to the younger population. This may be because young workers are generally more comfortable with mobile apps, online platforms, flexible working hours, and income-generating opportunities available through gig work. This shows that the gig economy is largely dominated by youth and young adults, highlighting the growing importance of digital platform-based employment among the younger population in urban areas like Anand.

Figure 2 Marital Status of the respondent



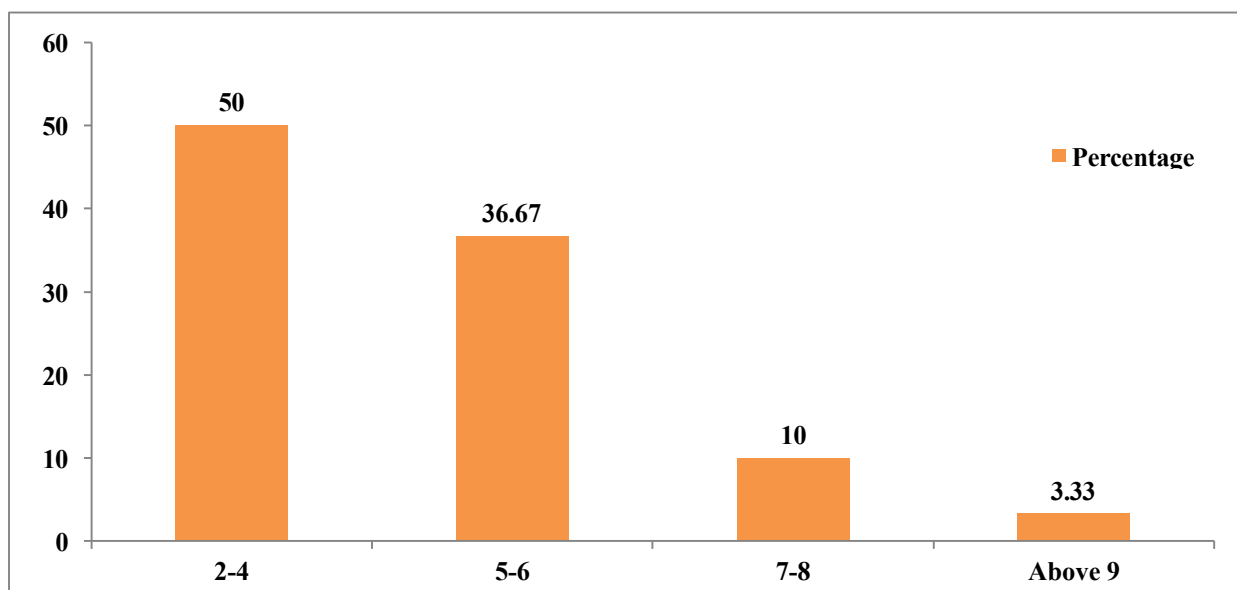
As above Figure 2 shows there is 70% of the workers unmarried while 30% are married, reflecting that a large proportion of young unmarried men are entering gig work to support themselves or their natal families.

Table 1 Gender Wise Participation

Variable	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Male	30	100
Female	00	0
Total	30	100

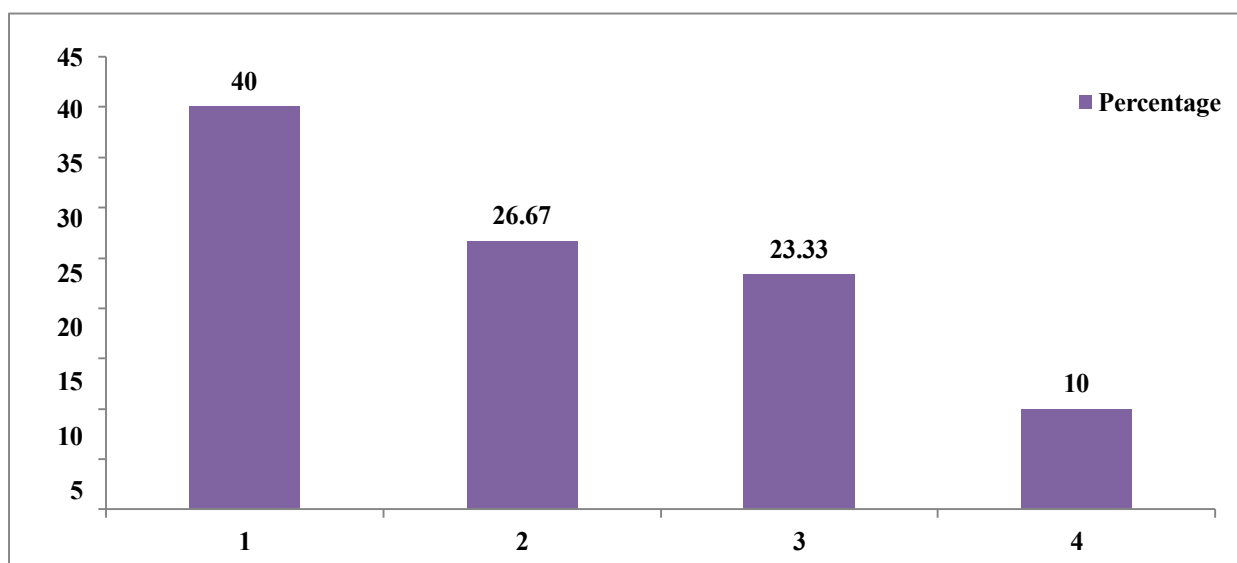
The above table 1 reveals that 100% percentage of the respondents are male, while there are no female respondents in the sample. This suggests that platform work in Anand City, especially delivery and transport- related work, is highly male dominated. Safety concerns, mobility issues, and social factors may limit women's participation in such jobs.

Figure 3 Distribution of family members of the respondent



The above figure 3 shows that 50% of respondents belong to families having 2-4 members, while 36.67% belong to families with 5–6 members. About 10% have 7–8 family members and only 3.33% percent have more than 9 members. This indicates that most respondents belong to small and medium-sized families, which may reduce economic burden to some extent.

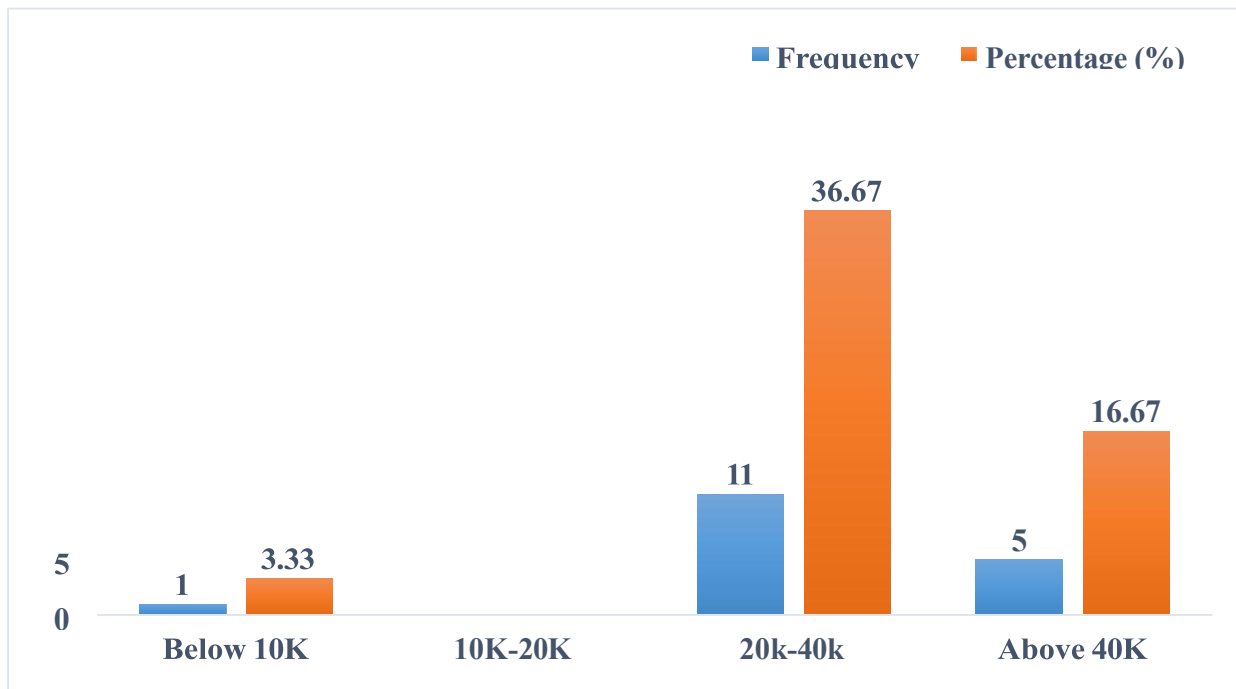
Figure 4 Working Members of the respondent



The above figure 4 reveals that 40% of respondents have only one earning member in the family. Around 26.67% have two working members, while 23.33% have three earning members and 10% have four earning members. This indicates that many platform workers carry major financial responsibility for their families.

Income and Financial Situation:

Figure 5 Status of Family Income of the platform workers (Rs. Per Month)



The above Figure 5 shows that the majority of platform workers' families earn between ₹10,000–₹20,000 per month (43.33%), followed by ₹20,000–₹40,000 (36.67%). About 16.67% of respondents have a family income of above ₹40,000, while only 3.33% earn below ₹10,000. Overall, the findings indicate that most platform workers belong to low and middle-income households, and platform work contributes significantly to their family income.

Table 2 Share of Monthly Income of the platform workers (Rs. Per Month)

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Below 10K	01	3.33
10K-20K	21	70.00
20K-30K	04	13.33
Above 30K	04	13.33
Total	30	100

The above table 2 presents the monthly income distribution of platform workers. The majority of respondents (70%) earn between ₹10,000 and ₹20,000 per month, indicating that most platform workers belong to the low-income category. Only 3.33% earn below ₹10,000, while 13.33% each earn ₹20,000–₹30,000 and above ₹30,000. Overall, the findings reveal that platform work provides a modest income for most workers, with a large concentration in the ₹10,000–₹20,000 income range.

Table 3 Status of other Income Sources of the Platform Workers

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	07	23.33
No	23	76.6
Total	30	100

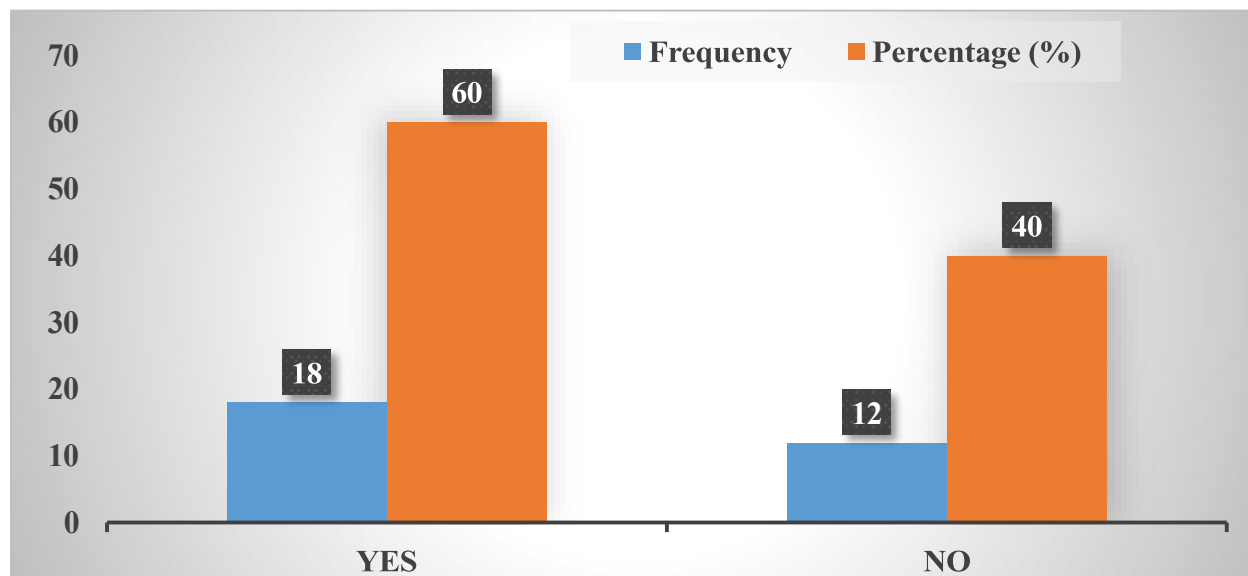
The above Table 3 presents the status of other income sources among platform workers. The majority of respondents (76.67%) reported that they do not have any other source of income, while only 23.33% stated that they have additional income sources. This indicates that most platform workers depend primarily on platform-based employment for their livelihood. The findings highlight the significant role of gig work as the main source of income for the majority of respondents.

Table 4 Status of Savings of the platform workers

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	06	20.00
Sometimes	13	43.33
No	11	36.67
Total	30	100

The above Table 4 presents the savings status of platform workers. A majority of respondents (43.33%) reported that they are able to save **sometimes**, while 36.67% stated that they are **unable to save**. Only 20% of the respondents regularly save a portion of their income. The findings suggest that irregular earnings and financial constraints limit the saving capacity of many platform workers, with most being able to save only occasionally.

Figure 6 status of Loans/Debts of the platform workers



The above Figure 6 presents the status of loans and debts among platform workers. A majority of respondents (60%) reported that they have loans or debts, while 40% stated that they do not have any outstanding debt. The findings indicate that a significant proportion of platform workers face financial obligations, suggesting their dependence on borrowing to meet household expenses, emergencies, or other financial needs. This reflects the economic challenges experienced by many workers in the gig economy.

Figure 7 Distribution of Respondents Across Different Platform-Based Employers (%)

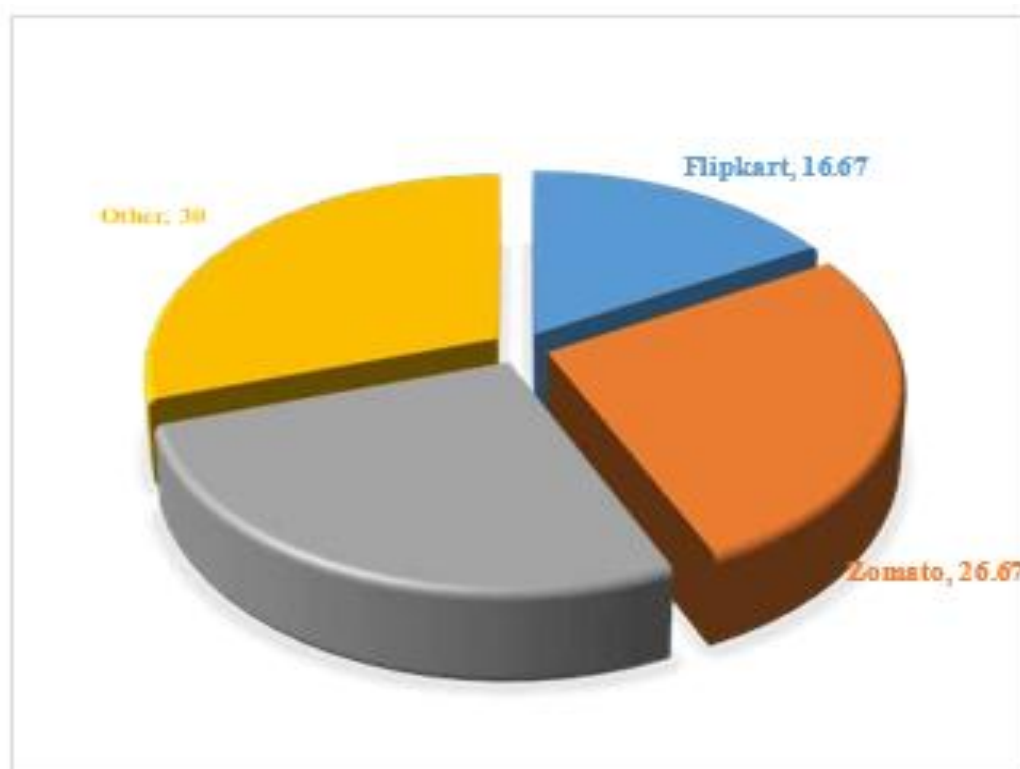


Figure 7 Distribution of Respondents Across Different Platform-Based Employers (%)

The above Figure 7 shows the distribution of respondents across different platform-based employers. The largest share of workers is engaged in other platforms (30%), followed by Swiggy (26.67%) and Zomato (26.67%). Flipkart accounts for 16.67% of the respondents. The findings indicate that platform workers are distributed across multiple digital platforms, with food delivery services such as Swiggy and Zomato together employing more than half (53.34%) of the respondents. This highlights the significant role of the food delivery sector in generating gig employment opportunities in the study area.

Social securities and benefits:

Table 5: Social Security & Benefits of Platform Workers of Anand City

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Benefits	None	19	63.33
	Bonus	8	26.67
	Insurance	3	10
	Paid Leave	0	0
	Total	30	100
Aware of Scheme	No	25	83.33
	Yes	5	16.67
	Total	30	100
Improved Living Standard	No	6	20
	Slightly	15	50
	Yes	9	30
	Total	30	100
Job Flexibility	Yes	27	90
	No	3	10
	Total	30	100
Better Than Traditional Job	Yes	24	80
	No	4	13.33
	Not Sure	2	6.67
	Total	30	100

The table 5 above describes work-related variables of respondents, including benefits received from platform work, awareness of government or welfare schemes, improvement in living standards, job flexibility, and comparison with traditional jobs.

These variables help to understand the quality of employment, access to worker benefits, financial and social improvement, and respondents' perceptions of platform-based work opportunities.

The social security position and perceived benefits of 30 platform workers in Anand City. It shows that a large majority of workers, 19 respondents (63.33%), reported receiving no benefits at all. Only 8 workers (26.67%) received a bonus and just 3 workers (10%) had insurance coverage. None of the respondents reported receiving paid leave. This clearly indicates that platform workers are largely outside the formal social security net and enjoy very limited employment-related protection.

Awareness of government or scheme-based support is also very low. Only 5 respondents (16.67%) said they were aware of a scheme, while 25 respondents (83.33%) were not aware. This suggests a serious gap in information dissemination and outreach. Lack of awareness may be one major reason why workers are unable to access welfare benefits available to them.

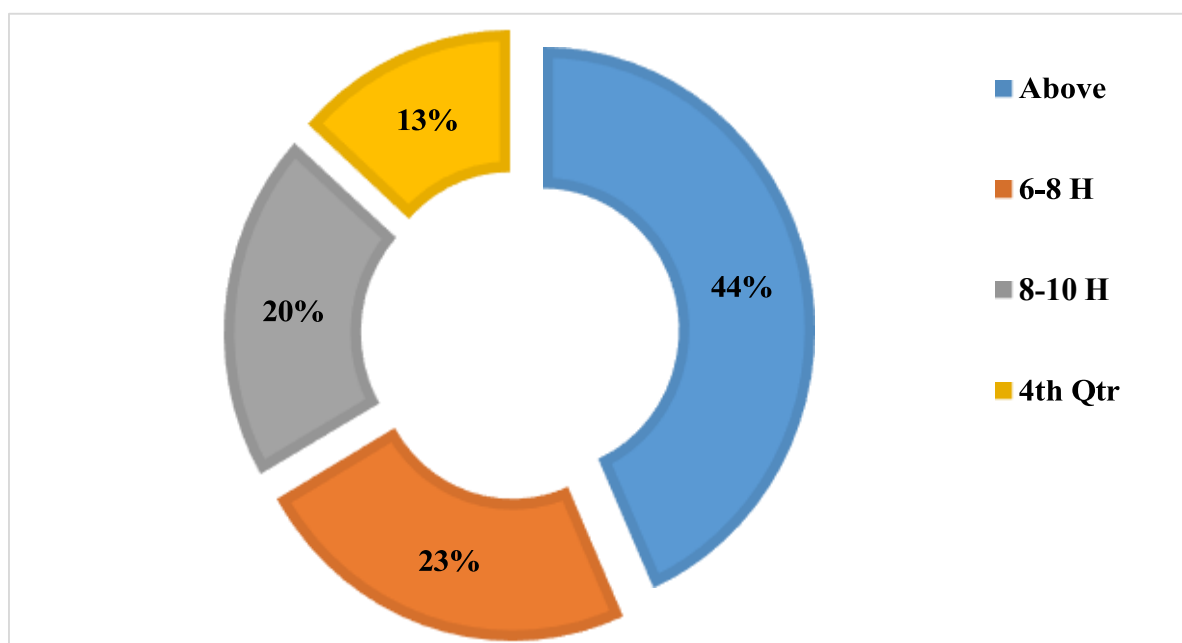
Regarding improvement in living standard, 9 workers (30%) said their living standard has improved, 15 workers (50%) felt it has improved only slightly, and 6 workers (20%) reported no improvement. This shows that platform work has brought some positive change, but the impact is mostly limited and partial rather than substantial. In other words, the income from platform work may help in meeting daily needs, but it is not sufficient to bring major economic security for most workers. At the same time, 27 respondents (90%) agreed that platform work offers job flexibility, while only 3 respondents (10%) disagreed. This is one of the strongest positive aspects of platform employment. Flexibility in working hours and freedom to choose work appear to be the main attractions of this sector.

When asked whether platform work is better than a traditional job, 24 respondents (80%) answered yes, 4 respondents (13.33%) said no, and 2 respondents (6.67%) were not sure. This indicates that most workers prefer platform work over traditional employment, mainly because of flexibility and the possibility of earning independently. However, this preference does not necessarily mean the job is secure or well protected, since the earlier data show very poor social security coverage. Overall, the table suggests that platform workers in Anand City enjoy high flexibility and a generally positive view of the work, but they face serious deficiencies in benefits, awareness, and social security protection. Their living standards have improved only marginally, showing that platform work provides income opportunities but not stable or comprehensive welfare support.

Work condition and perceptions:

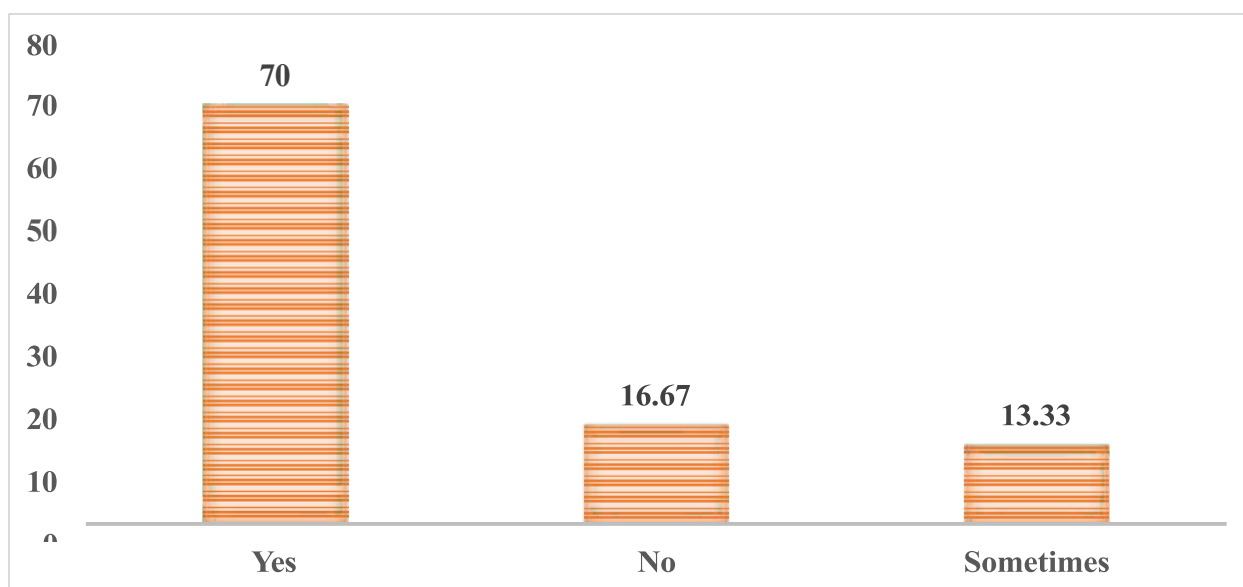
The work conditions and perceptions of platform workers in Anand City. The variables included in the table are working hours per day, stress levels, health risks, willingness to continue the job, and overall work experience. These variables help in understanding the nature of platform-based employment, the physical and mental challenges faced by workers, their job satisfaction, and the impact of work conditions on their socio-economic status. The table also reflects workers' perceptions regarding the sustainability and quality of platform work in comparison to their expectations and well-being.

Figure 8 Working Hours Per Day of the platform workers



The above figure 8 shows that 43.33% of respondents work above 10 hours per day, while 23.33% work for 6–8 hours. About 20% work for 8–10 hours, and 13.33% work below 6 hours per day. This indicates that many platform workers spend long hours at work to increase their earnings.

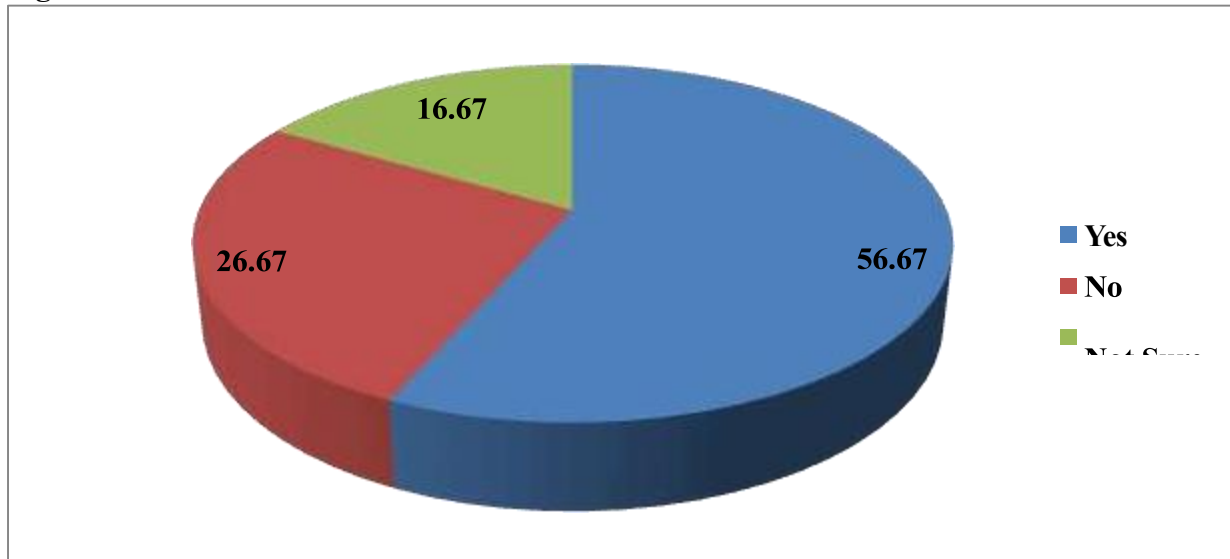
Figure 9 Experience Stress



The above figure 9 reveals that 70% of respondents experience stress in their work. Around 13.33% reported feeling stress sometimes, while only 16.67% stated that they do not experience stress. This suggests that platform work creates considerable mental pressure for most workers. indicates that 76.67% of respondents believe that platform work involves health risks,

whereas only 23.33% disagreed. This shows that many workers face physical strain, fatigue, or other health-related issues due to the nature of their work.

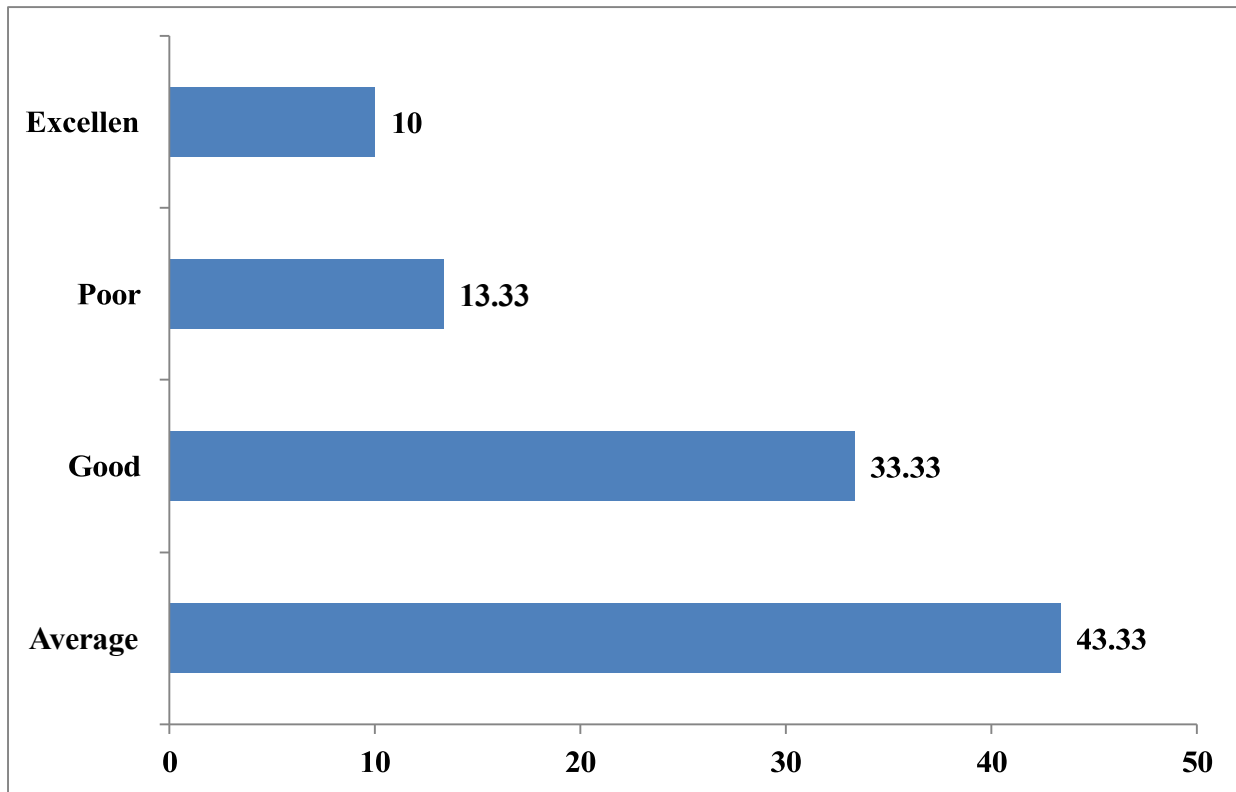
Figure 10 Continue the Same Job in The Future



The above Figure 10 presents the opinions of platform workers regarding whether they intend to continue the same job in the future. The findings reveal that 56.67 percent of the respondents expressed their willingness to continue platform work in the future, indicating that more than half of the workers value the flexibility and income opportunities offered by gig employment. However, 26.67 percent of the respondents stated that they do not wish to continue the same job. Their reluctance may be attributed to concerns such as job insecurity, unstable income, long working hours, lack of social security benefits, and limited career growth. The remaining 16.67 percent of respondents were not sure about continuing platform work in the future. This uncertainty suggests that their decision depends on factors such as future earnings, availability of better employment opportunities, improvements in working conditions, and access to social security benefits.

Overall, the findings indicate that while a majority of platform workers are willing to continue their current occupation due to its flexibility and earning potential, a considerable proportion remain dissatisfied or uncertain because of employment insecurity and inadequate welfare support. These results highlight the need for stronger labour protection measures, improved social security coverage, and better working conditions to enhance the long-term sustainability of platform employment.

Figure 11 Overall Experience OF Platform Workers



The above Figure 11 shows the overall experience of platform workers in Anand City. The largest share of respondents (**43.33%**) rated their experience as **Average**, indicating that while platform work provides employment and income, workers face challenges such as long working hours, job insecurity, and limited social security. About **33.33%** reported a **Good** experience, appreciating the flexibility and earning opportunities. In contrast, **13.33%** rated their experience as **Poor**, while only **10%** considered it **Excellent**. Overall, the findings suggest moderate satisfaction among platform workers and highlight the need for better job security, welfare benefits, and improved working conditions.

Conclusion:

The study concludes that platform work in Anand City is mainly dominated by young male workers who depend heavily on gig employment for their livelihood. Most respondents belong to small and medium-sized families and face financial insecurity due to moderate earnings, irregular savings, and debt burdens. Although workers appreciate the flexibility and earning opportunities provided by platform work, they receive limited social security benefits and have low awareness of welfare schemes. The findings also reveal long working hours, high stress levels, and health risks associated with platform employment. While some workers experienced improvement in their living standards, many expressed uncertainty about continuing in the same occupation. Overall, the study highlights both the opportunities and challenges of platform work, emphasizing the need for better worker protection, social security measures, and improved working conditions for gig workers.

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