

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR LEGAL RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS



Open Access, Refereed Journal Multi-Disciplinary
Peer Reviewed

www.ijlra.com

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Avinash Kumar



Avinash Kumar has completed his Ph.D. in International Investment Law from the Dept. of Law & Governance, Central University of South Bihar. His research work is on "International Investment Agreement and State's right to regulate Foreign Investment." He qualified UGC-NET and has been selected for the prestigious ICSSR Doctoral Fellowship. He is an alumnus of the Faculty of Law, University of Delhi. Formerly he has been elected as Students Union President of Law Centre-1, University of Delhi. Moreover, he completed his LL.M. from the University of Delhi (2014-16), dissertation on "Cross-border Merger & Acquisition"; LL.B. from the University of Delhi (2011-14), and B.A. (Hons.) from Maharaja Agrasen College, University of Delhi. He has also obtained P.G. Diploma in IPR from the Indian Society of International Law, New Delhi. He has qualified UGC – NET examination and has been awarded ICSSR – Doctoral Fellowship. He has published six-plus articles and presented 9 plus papers in national and international seminars/conferences. He participated in several workshops on research methodology and teaching and learning.

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INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR LEGAL RESEARCH & ANALYSIS
ISSN

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ANALYZING THE LEGAL ISSUES FACED BY GIG WORKERS: EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS, FAIR PAY, AND SOCIAL SECURITY WITH CASE STUDIES ON GLOBAL RESPONSES.

AUTHORED BY - SUSMITA CHAKRABORTY (DILS)

Abstract

The gig economy has transformed labor markets worldwide. While offering excellent flexibility and independence to workers, at a cursory look, it has opened many doors for problems concerning employment rights, adequate remuneration, and social security. This paper explores the issues surrounding rights of gig workers, with a particular focus on how countries have addressed challenges related to these rights in the form of legislative and policy responses. Such case studies from the United States of America, the United Kingdom, and India depict how extensively varied the methods and strategies of such countries differ with respect to protection for gig workers and the systems and measures in place to ensure fairness and equality.

1. Introduction

The expansion of the so-called gig economy, which refers to short-term, flexible, and freelance work, is fostered by technological advancement and new economic models. Gig work is very liberating for employees, with regard to flexibility and independence. However, this type of work incurs major issues about employment rights and fair compensation, plus social security problems. This paper explores the legal issues concerned with gig workers and how various countries intend to address such problems.

2. Legal Issues Faced by Gig Workers

2.1 Employment Rights

Gig workers, many of whom are categorized as independent contractors rather than employees, have almost no protection under traditional labor law. The three key issues are:

Job Security: For most gig workers, there is no guaranteed entitlement to paid leave, health

insurance, or retirement plans.

Right to bargain collectively: Unlike employees, the gig economy representatives have no right to unionize or bargain collectively for better working conditions.

2.2 Fair Pay

Issues about fair remuneration are top in the list for gig workers, and among those issues is that of **Income instability:** The income levels for gig workers vary significantly because it creates significant problems in financial planning.

Wage Gaps: Gigs tend to be considerably lower in wage for their workers than are the earnings of the traditional kind, especially with the provision of "processing fees" by some of the platforms in deduction from take-home pay.

2.3 Social Security

The gigs normally lack many social security benefits. Since most forms of social security benefits are not well provided in gigs, including unemployment benefits. To date, there is normally a significant lack of unemployment benefits for gig workers.

Retirement Savings Without employer retirement plan contributions, gig workers must place their own retirement savings.

3. Case Studies

3.1 United States

Legal Framework: Within the US, with a perspective of FLSA, gig workers are generally categorized as independent contractors. These statuses limit them to experiencing fewer mainstream employment benefits.

Key Developments:

- California's Assembly Bill 5 (AB5): New law passed in 2020 extend employee status to many gig workers, thus unlocking unemployment insurance and health-care coverage (California Legislative Information, 2020).

Proposition 22: Approved in 2020, removes gig economy companies like Uber and Lyft from the impact of AB5 and continued to classify drivers as independent contractors but will offer minimal benefits (Uber Technologies, 2020).¹

¹ Uber Technologies. (2020). Proposition 22: The future of work. Retrieved from [Uber] (<https://www.uber.com>)

Impact: The tension between AB5 and Proposition 22 highlights the ongoing debate over gig worker classification and benefits, with mixed outcomes for worker protection.²

3.2 United Kingdom

Legal Framework In the UK, gig workers fall under the category of "workers" rather than independent contractors, meaning that they receive some employment rights.

Key Developments

Uber BV v. Aslam: In 2021, the UK Supreme Court had made a landmark judgment determining that Uber drivers are actually workers with all rights to the minimum wage and paid leave thereunder (Supreme Court of the United Kingdom, 2021).³

UK GOVERNMENT REFORMS FOR GIG ECONOMY. The UK government has agreed to reform its position to uphold better rights for gig workers like clear definitions concerning employment status and access to many benefits (UK Government, 2021).⁴

Effects: Under the recent judgment of Uber BV v. Aslam, Gig Economy workers won crucial full-scale win, but the protection that this exposes still lies pregnant with additional legislative reforms.

3.3 India

Legal Framework: India has a rapidly growing gig economy, but the law gives workers minimal protection; instead, they are classified as independent contractors and consequently enjoy very minimal statutory benefits.

Major Developments:

- National Employment Policy: The Government of India is framing the National Employment Policy in order to resolve gig economy-related issues. It is hoped that the

² California Legislative Information. (2020). AB-5 Employment: independent contractors. Retrieved from [California Legislative Information] (<https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov>)

³ Supreme Court of the United Kingdom. (2021). Uber BV v. Aslam. Retrieved from [Supreme Court] (<https://www.supremecourt.uk>)

⁴ UK Government. (2021). Good Work Plan: Proposals for employment law reform. Retrieved from [UK Government] (<https://www.gov.uk>)

proposed national policy's regulation would improve the prospects of benefits and protection for workers (Ministry of Labour and Employment, 2020).

- Social Security Code: The Social Security Code, 2020, is designed to bring social security benefits to the gig and platform workers; however, it is still an incomplete and not largely covered legislation (Ministry of Labour and Employment, 2020).⁵

Impact: The proposed reforms are steps toward better protection for gig workers, but practical challenges and implementation hurdles remain.⁶

4. Comparative Analysis

However, the case studies do indicate that various countries are dealing with gig worker protection differently, and with mixed success:

- US: In the U.S., the AB5 and Proposition 22 debates highlight the delicate balance between the rights of the gig workers and the interests of gig economy companies.⁷⁸
- UK: Landmark legal decisions like the Uber BV v. Aslam decision in the UK provide a base for future changes in law but do not solve the underlying need for reforms to legislation.⁹
- India: New policies such as the Social Security Code suggest that some steps are being taken in the right direction. A lot will now depend on their effective implementation and extension to larger numbers of people for meaningful protection.

5. Conclusion

The gig economy poses unique challenges in enforcing the employment rights, fair pay, and social security agenda. The roadmap for resolving these differences is country-specific; there is no universally applicable one. There is now a compelling need to have continued reforms in the existing legal framework and policy innovations in order to ensure fair deal and

⁵ Ministry of Labour and Employment. (2020). National Employment Policy. Retrieved from [Ministry of Labour and Employment] (<https://labour.gov.in>)

⁶ Ministry of Labour and Employment. (2020). Social Security Code, 2020. Retrieved from [Ministry of Labour and Employment] (<https://labour.gov.in>)

⁷ California Legislative Information. (2020). AB-5 Employment: independent contractors. Retrieved from [California Legislative Information] (<https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov>)

⁸ Uber Technologies. (2020). Proposition 22: The future of work. Retrieved from [Uber] (<https://www.uber.com>)

⁹ Supreme Court of the United Kingdom. (2021). Uber BV v. Aslam. Retrieved from [Supreme Court] (<https://www.supremecourt.uk>)

adequate protection for the gig workers.¹⁰¹¹¹²comparative approach underlines the need for a continuous process of reform in all countries in order to keep adapting so that fair and equitable treatments to all gig workers across the world can be ensured.

A jurisprudence analysis of the issue is going to be as all-inclusive as possible for gig workers and understand the different legal systems that are going to react to the various problems this shift creates. The comparative approach underlines the need for a continuous process of reform in all countries in order to keep adapting so that fair and equitable treatments to all gig workers across the world can be ensured.



¹⁰ UK Government. (2021). Good Work Plan: Proposals for employment law reform. Retrieved from [UK Government] (<https://www.gov.uk>)

¹¹ Ministry of Labour and Employment. (2020). National Employment Policy. Retrieved from [Ministry of Labour and Employment] (<https://labour.gov.in>)

¹² Ministry of Labour and Employment. (2020). Social Security Code, 2020. Retrieved from [Ministry of Labour and Employment] (<https://labour.gov.in>)