

E-COMMERCE & DIRECT SELLING: A BIG SOLUTION FOR UNDEREMPLOYMENT & UNEMPLOYMENT

By

Rakesh Kumar, MSc CAIIB

DISSERTATION

Presented to Swiss School of Business Management Geneva

In Partial Fulfilment

of the Requirements

For the Degree

DOCTOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

SWISS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT GENEVA

JUNE, 2025

E-COMMERCE & DIRECT SELLING: A BIG SOLUTION FOR UNDEREMPLOYMENT & UNEMPLOYMENT

By

Rakesh Kumar, MSc CAIB

APPROVED BY



Dissertation chair – Dr. Gualdino Cardoso

RECEIVED/APPROVED BY:



Admissions Director

Acknowledgement

Efforts have been made in this endeavour; nonetheless, it would not have been feasible without the unwavering love, support, and resources provided by my parents.

It has been a wonderful honour and joy to study at SSBM GENEVA through UPGRAD. I am profoundly grateful to my guide and mentor Prof. Aleksandar Erceg for his direction and unwavering supervision. Without his extensive experience, completing the thesis would have been unfeasible.

I extend my gratitude to my wife and kids for their unwavering belief in me, even during moments of self-doubt.

I express my gratitude to my father, mother, and wife for serving as exceptional stress relievers on particularly exhausting days.

Last but most important, I would want to thank my friends for treating me patiently in my impatient moments when completing my thesis.

ABSTRACT

E-COMMERCE & DIRECT SELLING: A BIG SOLUTION FOR UNDEREMPLOYMENT & UNEMPLOYMENT

Rakesh Kumar, MSc CAIIB, June 2025

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Gualdino Cardoso

This study looks at how e-commerce and direct selling can help young people in India who are unemployed or underemployed. Unemployment (not having a job at all) is still a big problem, but underemployment (having a job that is below your skill level or capacity) is even worse and has a bigger impact on youth development. The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) says that India's youth unemployment rate fell to 10.2% in 2023–24. At the same time, the percentage of people in the labour force rose from 31.4% in 2017–18 to 41.7% in 2023–24 (PIB, 2024). This shows that more people are getting involved, but not necessarily using their skills to their full potential. At the same time, almost 83% of India's unemployed people are between the ages of 15 and 29. Many of them are educated but working in jobs that don't match their skills.

As a result, gig economy platforms, digital product sales, and affiliate marketing have become flexible and scalable options. Amway India's switch to digital tools changed their e-commerce share from about 33% in early 2020 to about 70% in 2021 (Nischala, 2024). This shows how digital direct selling can greatly increase reach and income opportunities. Amazon's affiliate program also lets people make money from online content without having to spend a lot of money. Some young creators have been able to make a lot of money through this program, with commissions ranging from 1% to 10% depending on the type of product. These models have low barriers to entry, independence, and the ability to grow, which are all things that young people who don't want to do traditional "white-collar" or low-paying jobs want.

This change helps people grow mentally, spiritually, and personally, in addition to financially. Working as a gig worker, micro-entrepreneur, or digital seller improves self-efficacy, problem-solving skills, and a sense of ownership. These roles give people a sense of purpose and

connection to online communities, which boosts their self-esteem, which is especially important for young people who aren't using their time well. Even a small amount of income can help people stay financially stable and lower their stress levels, which lets them focus on growth, stability, and self-improvement.

In the end, the study says that e-commerce-driven direct selling and gig work can help solve the problem of underutilised labour if they are supported by policies, digital infrastructure, and programs that help people learn new skills. These models don't solve all problems, but they do help traditional job paths by giving young people with skills and education a place to work that is dignified, flexible, and allows for growth. The study suggests that India should use this chance by combining digital entrepreneurship with targeted training and rules. This kind of plan could help millions of young people who are not working enough become engaged, empowered contributors to economic growth and social well-being.

Table of Contents

Chapter I: Introduction

1.1 Overview	1
1.2 Background of the study	2
1.3 Need of the Study.....	2
1.4 Overview of the Gig Economy	3
1.4.1. Key Characteristics	3
1.5 The Gig (Platform) Economy in India	5
1.5.1 The Rise of the Platform Economy in India	6
1.6 Elements of the Gig Economy	6
1.7 The Economic Impacts of Gig Economy Platforms	7
1.7.1 Impacts of the Gig Economy Platform	7
1.8 The Labour Market in the Gig Economy	8
1.9 The Triangular Relationships of Gig Workers in the Economy	9
1.10 Concept of Digital Labour Platforms.....	10
1.10.1 Characteristics of Digital Platforms.....	11
1.10.2. Types of Digital Labour Platforms.....	12
1.11 Managing Platform Workers Through Effective Platform Design	18
1.12 Overview of Hyperlocal Discovery Platform	21
1.12.1 Phases of Hyperlocal Model	23
1.13 Concept of App-Based Approach of Hyperlocal Discovery Platforms	25
1.14 Famous App-Based Hyperlocal Startups in India.....	28
1.15 Motivational Factors in the Gig Economy	29
1.15.1 Overview of Motivational Factors	29

Chapter II: Literature Review

2.1 Overview	31
--------------------	----

2.2 Literature Review on the Digital India Programme on E-Commerce and Direct Selling Business	31
2.3 Literature Review on E-Commerce Business vs. Traditional Retail Business	42
2.4 Literature Review on E-commerce Business Drawbacks	49
2.5 Review of Literature on Digital Media Communication Channels	51
2.6 Review Related to Gig Economy	61
A summary of the literature review	65

Chapter III: Research Methodology

3.1 Overview	66
3.2 Importance of the Study	68
3.3 Conceptual Framework	69
3.4 Variables of the Study	69
3.5 Objectives of the Study	71
3.6 The Hypothesis of the Study	72
3.7 Research Methodology	73
3.8 Study Area	73
3.9 Targeted Population	73
3.10 Sample of the Study	73
3.11 Sampling Technique	74
3.12 Collection of Data	74
3.13 Statistical Tools	75
3.14 Statistical Technique	76

Chapter IV: Data Analysis and Interpretation

4.1 Introductions	82
4.2 Data Cleaning	82
4.3 Descriptive Analysis of Data	83
4.4 Data Analysis and Interpretation	85

4.4.1 Specifying the Structural Model	86
4.4.2 Specifying the Measurement Model	87
4.4.3 Data Collection and Examination	88
4.4.4 Sample Size Estimation	89
4.4.5 Assessment of Measurement Model	93
4.4.6 Assessment of Structural Model	108
4.5 Chapter Conclusion/Summary	114
Chapter V: Conclusion, Limitation and Future Directions	
5.1 Summary of the Study	116
Chapter 1-Introduction:.....	116
Chapter 2-Review of Literature:	116
Chapter 3-Research Methodology:	116
Chapter 4-Data Analysis and Interpretation:.....	117
5.2 Conclusions.....	117
5.3 Limitations of the Current Study	119
5.4 Implications of the Study	120
5.5 Future Directions	120
Annexure I- Questionnaire.....	134
Annexure 2:.....	140
Purpose.....	140
Implications.....	141
Introduction.....	142
Significance.....	145
A. QNET Services: Low-Capital Entry for Entrepreneurship	146
B. No Stock, No Office, No Inventory	148
C. Global Product Access	149
D. Flexible, Scalable Business Model	150

E. Comparison of QNET vs other similar services	152
F. So, What's the Problem, then?	165
G. Lack of Understanding & Mindset for Digital Selling	166
H. Legal & Regulatory Scrutiny	168
I. Future of QNET.....	169
J. QNET & Its IDs Are Now:.....	169
K. Limitations for the Direct Sellers	170
L. Final Answer: Nothing Is Inherently Wrong; But Execution Matters	171

List of Tables

Table 1.1: Comparison of various online jobs, including the gig workers and service providers (Kannabiran and Narayan, 2005).....	18
Table 1.2: Services performed either virtually or physically.	19
Table 4.3: Causes of errors in data collections causing the rejections.	83
Table 4.4: Demographic Profile.	84
Table 4.5: KMO and Bartlett's Test.....	89
Table 4.6: Communalities.	90
Table 4.7: Variance Table.	92
Table 4.8: Dropped Entries.	94
Table 4.9: Data Normality.....	95
Table 4.10: Construct Validity and Reliability.	99
Table 4.11: Validity and Reliability Matrix.....	102
Table 4.12: Cross Loadings of Indicators and Items.....	103
Table 4.13: Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT).	106
Table 4.14: Goodness of Fit of a Model.	110
Table 4.15: Hypothesis Table.....	112
Table A.16: comparison of Jewellery sellers between Kinnari (QNET) vs other jewellery sellers (Kalyani, 2019).	158
Table A.17: Holiday services offered by QNET vs other holiday selling services.....	159
Table A.18: Comparison of QNET vs other health and beauty product services (Shi et al., 2024).	160
Table A.19: Comparison of QNET vs home appliance sellers (Kent, 2013).	161
Table A. 20: Comparative Analysis: QNET's CHAIROS & Bernhard H. Mayer vs. Rolex, Rado, CIMIER & Mugnier	163
Table 21: Ranking of the watch companies with respect to QNET.	165

List of Figures

Figure 1.1: Direct Selling. (Tan and Ouyang, 2003).....	10
Figure 1.2: Digital Selling, Direct Selling, Gig Market. (Rao, 2005).....	13
Figure 1.3: Hyperlocal Market Services. (Pal and Tripathi, 2022).....	22
Figure 3.4: Design of the Research Process.....	67
Figure 3.5: Flowchart depiction of the Research Process.....	68
Figure 3.6: Dependent and Independent Variables.	69
Figure 3.7: Pictographical representation of the sampling process.	73
Figure 4.8: Procedure for applying CB-SEM through AMOS.	86
Figure 4.9: Structure for modelling.	87
Figure 4.10: Measuring Tool.....	88
Figure 4.11: Assessment Measurement Model.	107
Figure 4.12: Structural modal for assessment.....	114
Figure A.1: Services offered by QNET ('QNET - Advancing Leadership Excellence in Manitoba', 2025).....	144
Figure A.2: Comparison of QNET vs other Online Selling Business (Amazon/Flipkart).152	
Figure A.3: Comparison of Direct Selling vs other sectors of Employment.	154
Figure A.4: Self Employment on QNET vs Affiliate Marketing program (Amazon). ...	155
Figure A.5: Franchise comparison between QNET, Traditional Franchise and Traditional Business.	157

List of Abbreviations

DM	Digital Marketing
E-COMMERCE	Electronic Commerce
CBB	Consumer Buying Behaviour
SMEs	Small and Medium – Sized Enterprises
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
IBEF	Indian Brand Equity Foundation
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GoI	Government of India
COVID	Corona Virus Disease
B2B	Business to Business
B2C	Business to Consumer
C2B	Consumer to Business
C2C	Consumer to Consumer
DSL	Digital Subscriber Line
EFT	Electronic Fund Transfer
RFQs	Request For Quotation
POTS	Plain Old Telephone System
SSC	Secure Socket Layer
SET	Secure Electronic Transaction
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
WWW	World Wide Web
PPC	Pay – Per – Click
SMM	Social Media Marketing
COD	Cash on Delivery
DPIIT	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade
IoT	Internet of Things
SERPs	Search Engine Results Pages
CAN-SPAM	Controlling the Assault of Non-Solicited Pornography and Marketing
CPC	Cost per Click
CPM	Cost per Thousand
ROI	Return on Investment
SEM	Search Engine Marketing
SEO	Search Engine Optimization

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

Digital technologies are profoundly transforming many facets of human life, particularly in the area of employment. Efficient and affordable data transmission among people, businesses, and devices has laid the essential foundation for the rise and development of digital platforms and the digital economy. These changes have also impacted employment, as digital platforms have entered various sectors of the economy. Platforms can be categorised into three main types: those offering digital products and services to users, exemplified by social media platforms like TikTok and Facebook; those enabling the exchange of goods and services, including e-commerce sites such as Alibaba, Flipkart, and Amazon, as well as electronic payment and B2B platforms like Payfast and Paytm; and those facilitating labour exchange among consumers, workers, and businesses, represented by digital labour platforms like Upwork and Uber (International Labour Organisation [ILO], 2021; (Kansiime *et al.*, 2025).

The swift changes in work practices and the business landscape due to digital labour platforms will significantly impact the future of work. These systems can be broadly classified into two main types: location-based systems and internet-based systems. Both types of platforms utilise electronic applications to connect independent contractors with clients. This allows individuals and businesses to perform various tasks, such as ordering food, arranging transportation, and locating freelancers for website creation or document translation. They are shaping the future of employment and the economy by connecting businesses with workers. Many tasks carried out on these platforms have previously been performed in the traditional labour market and continue to be executed there today (Wang, Lyu and Zhou, 2025).

Global job structures have significantly changed due to technological advancements, increasing demand for flexible work arrangements, and rising unemployment concerns. The gig economy describes a growing labour market where companies engage independent workers for short-term contracts, often referred to as "gigs," via online platforms that link workers to clients (Spreitzer *et al.*, 2017; Jabagi *et al.*, 2018). Digital labour platforms serve as the technological basis for these digital marketplaces. The gig economy represents a major shift in work dynamics, akin to the impact of industrialisation. Gig organisations are marked by individuals and entities working in a disconnected and distributed way.

Advancements in information technology have facilitated a significant shift towards self-employment and self-management in open networks, marking a transformative change in the nature of work. In this unique context, where gig workers lack a specific human supervisor, the ways companies can support the self-motivation of these workers are not clearly defined and remain underexplored (Rodrik and Sandhu, 2025).

1.2 Background of the study

Work and job relations have experienced significant transformation over the past few decades. The characteristics and cultural perceptions of traditional employment, particularly full-time roles, are increasingly being replaced by non-standard, casual work arrangements in the post-war era. As the second decade of the twenty-first century ends, concerns about a work environment dominated by automation and artificial intelligence linger, contributing to the prevalence of the gig economy. In this context, “work” has shifted to “gigs” or “tasks,” with “employees” now referred to as “riders” and “taskers.” The rise of mobile technology has led to the emergence of a market for on-demand employment (Zhang *et al.*, 2025).

This study aims to explore the motivations that drive gig workers to engage with these platforms. This study uses a mixed-methods approach, incorporating interviews and platform analysis, to explore the factors influencing gig workers' engagement. Key aspects include financial incentives, flexibility, work-life balance, skill utilisation, and independence. This research enhances understanding of gig work and provides insights for platform operators, policymakers, and researchers on the main motivating factors that can influence the development of interventions and policies aimed at improving the well-being and satisfaction of gig workers in India's gig economy (Wang and Wu, 2025).

1.3 Need of the Study

Understanding the motivations behind gig workers on app-based hyperlocal discovery platforms in India is crucial, given the rise of gig work and its impact on the labour market. Understanding the factors that motivate individuals to participate in gig work is crucial for platform operators, policymakers, and researchers, especially as this employment model becomes increasingly significant. This study identifies key motivating factors that could significantly improve the work experience and well-being of gig workers. Additionally, it can guide the development of interventions and policies that address the needs of gig workers,

promote fair labour practices, and create a sustainable and inclusive gig economy in India (Soundarya and Kumar, 2025b).

1.4 Overview of the Gig Economy

The gig economy is known by several names, such as the sharing economy, peer economy, on-demand economy, and platform economy. The term "gig economy" refers to a labour market characterised by temporary, independent, and flexible work arrangements. In this economic context, people often adopt a project-based approach, taking on different gigs or assignments as independent contractors rather than filling traditional employee roles within organisations. Digital platforms have significantly accelerated the gig economy by connecting workers with employers or customers seeking specific services (Soundarya and Kumar, 2025a).

1.4.1. Key Characteristics

- **Flexibility:** The gig economy is marked by its significant feature of offering workers considerable flexibility. Individuals have the freedom to choose when, where, and how much they work, which helps them balance their professional and personal lives and allows them to pursue various income-generating activities.
- **Independent Work:** Many gig workers operate as independent contractors, providing services as required. They are not obligated to enter long-term contracts and can select the jobs or gigs they prefer to undertake.
- **Digital Platforms:** Technological advancements play a crucial role in the gig economy. Gig workers utilise digital platforms such as ride-hailing apps, online marketplaces, and freelancing websites to connect with clients or employers. These marketplaces act as intermediaries, connecting buyers and sellers.
- **Diverse Workforce:** The gig economy encompasses a wide range of work types. Gig workers exist across various sectors, including transportation (like ride-sharing drivers), deliveries, household tasks, the arts, and business. (Soundarya and Kumar, 2025a)

➤ Benefits of the Gig Economy

- Freelancing offers individuals the ability to determine their own schedules, select tasks that interest them, and exert greater control over their professional lives compared to previous employment models.

- The gig economy has created opportunities for individuals to enhance their regular income through side jobs. This opportunity may appeal to individuals looking to launch a business or increase their earnings.
- Gig labour allows individuals to enhance existing skills or acquire new ones regularly. This platform allows individuals to explore different sectors, gain diverse experiences, and build a portfolio of work (Sharma, 2025).

➤ **Perks of the “Gig Economy” for Different Stakeholders**

The benefits of the gig economy vary significantly based on the perspective of the consumer, worker, or business (Saurav, 2025).

❖ **The business:** The gig economy enables companies to reduce expenses and enhance operational efficiency. Employers are not required to provide a physical workplace or benefits such as paid time off or health insurance, and this expectation is generally absent. The gig economy's flexibility enables companies to hire specialists for short-term or specialised tasks, which would be costly to employ permanently.

❖ **The worker:** In the gig economy, a worker's work-life balance might improve compared to traditional employment models. Freelancers can select projects that engage their interests, offer new experiences, and align with their needs and schedules. They seek to evade the constraints of a traditional 9–5 job that fails to satisfy their needs or offer the necessary freedom. Employees in this field enjoy greater flexibility in selecting their schedules, allowing them to avoid being restricted to a single employer.

❖ **The consumer:** Customers appreciate the flexibility and diversity offered by the gig economy for hiring individuals to deliver private services. Numerous services now offer improved quality at lower costs than in the past. There is now a greater range of service providers, delivery options, and physical locations available to you (Ghare, 2025).

➤ **Challenges and Concerns**

- **Income Stability:** Many gig workers face significant concerns regarding their economic security. Gig workers face significant financial insecurity due to the potential for low demand and challenges in maintaining steady income.
- **Gig workers,** as independent contractors, often lack the benefits and protections afforded to regular employees. They might face difficulties in accessing their rights to social security and wages.

- **Freelance workers** often face challenges in accessing social safety nets, such as worker protections, disability insurance, and benefits, due to the absence of the same legal frameworks that govern traditional employment.
- **Job Insecurity:** Gig workers often experience concerns regarding their job security, opportunities for advancement, and the stability of their income. To maintain consistent revenue, it is essential to regularly seek new opportunities and clients (Mwesha, Koome and Wachira, 2025).

1.5 The Gig (Platform) Economy in India

In the last ten years, India has seen notable expansion in the gig economy. This phenomenon grows due to multiple contributing factors. The decline in agriculture has led to a continuous movement of low-skilled workers from rural regions to cities. The low barriers to entry on these platforms have enabled significant growth. The availability of mobile devices with internet access has enhanced last-mile access for platform workers, allowing them to connect with customers more effectively. India, as the largest two-wheeler market globally, gains from this trend. The growing availability of venture capital has significantly contributed to market growth, as noted in the Fair Work India Report of 2020. In the last five years, app-based technology has significantly increased in prevalence. As a result, academic interest, especially in the global South, has notably increased in the last ten years. This interest stems from the understanding that app-based labour is a new and evolving type of work. It is characterised by insufficient data collection and is not fully addressed by traditional labour frameworks that depend on technological developments (Thumakunta, 2024).

The erosion of workers' rights contrasts with the advantages the platform or gig economy offers to consumers in the workplace. Current methodologies make it extremely difficult to accurately measure the number of individuals working as gig workers, despite the growing prevalence of the gig economy. Workers who do not conform to a single category may encompass individuals with irregular hours, those who are self-employed, individuals holding multiple jobs, or those who are unemployed (Zwick, 2018). In 2017, approximately 55 million individuals in the United States were engaged in the platform economy. However, estimating the number of gig workers remains difficult due to their often-unnoticed presence and the heavy reliance on companies for data. NITI Aayog reports that since 2014, aggregators such as Ola and Uber have created between one million and 2.2 million new jobs for gig workers in India. The Fairwork India 2020 Report indicates that approximately 3.03 million individuals are engaged

as platform workers across the 11 largest platforms in India. No gender-specific information is available. Team Lease Services estimates that approximately 68,000 women are currently employed in the delivery sector, attributed to reduced turnover, improved ratings for delivery women, and enhanced warehouse efficiency. Consequently, the demand for female employees in logistics and distribution centres has increased (Ghare, 2025).

1.5.1 The Rise of the Platform Economy in India

Several challenges must be addressed before we can fully understand the scope of India's gig economy. There is a lack of reliable data regarding the total number of gig jobs in India, primarily due to insufficient institutional statistics (Shi *et al.*, 2024).

1. Team Lease Services, a human resources organisation, reports that the gig economy accounts for 56% of new job creation in India. This figure encompasses both white-collar and blue-collar employees. Additionally, Delhi stands out as the preferred destination for newcomers entering the gig economy (Zhang *et al.*, 2024).
2. The gig economy in urban India has expanded notably, currently employing millions of migrant workers and holding the potential for even greater job creation in the future.
3. Freelancers constitute a \$2-3 billion global industry, with India capturing approximately one-third of this market. True Lancer estimates that the United States has 53 million freelancers, while India has 15 million working independently.
4. The platform economy in India has consistently grown due to the rising demand for services and an available workforce (Yoganandan, 2024).

1.6 Elements of the Gig Economy

▪ Ease of Entry-Exit

The gig economy's primary appeal lies in its ease of entry and exit, drawing individuals seeking immediate financial relief. The ease of accessing platforms is influenced by prerequisites such as skills, job experience, and material assets, along with the recruitment process that involves document verification and interviews. In gig economies, the barriers to entry are reduced as the requirements are minimal.

▪ Asset Requirement

In a neoliberal economy, various stakeholders assume greater financial and operational risks beyond the company itself (Singh and Kadam, 2024). Gig platforms often require workers to

own or rent essential equipment, such as cars, motorcycles, makeup kits, or outfits, prior to joining and starting their work.

- **Flexibility and Autonomy**

Gig platforms largely aim to offer workers flexibility in choosing their schedules and compensation. Gig workers differ from traditional employees in that they are seen as partners, sharing profits with their clients (Schwellnus et al., 2019).

- **Risks and Vulnerabilities**

Gig platforms have thrived in the post-Fordist era by transferring market risk from businesses to employees. Workers face vulnerability stemming from the unpredictable aspects of their contractual relationships (Singh and Kadam, 2024).

- **Ability/Capacity to Earn**

One advantage of gig work compared to traditional employment is the potential to earn based on the value of the job performed (Sharma, 2024).

1.7 The Economic Impacts of Gig Economy Platforms

Assessing the economic implications of gig economy platforms requires consideration of how effectively these platforms connect employees with clients. Gig economy platforms develop advanced matching algorithms that leverage digital technology to track fragmented service demand and labour supply in real-time. Data on personal transport indicates that this can result in notable improvements in matching efficiency. Research indicates that Uber drivers' capacity utilisation is up to 50% higher than that of traditional taxi drivers in the United States (Cramer and Krueger, 2016). Likewise, Uber users experience significantly shorter wait times compared to traditional taxi passengers (Nagar and Ahmad, 2024).

1.7.1 Impacts of the Gig Economy Platform

A new platform enhances competitiveness and reduces service costs. A more substantial price reduction occurs with higher fixed entry costs in the traditional sector and greater efficiency gaps between platforms and traditional providers in matching capabilities.

Predicting the impact of platform participation on overall productivity, specifically in terms of client-worker matches per worker, poses challenges. Platforms enhance the efficiency of task matching through advanced matching technologies. Despite easier access to job opportunities

through platforms, actual employment rates remain low. Productivity impacts can be shown to be positive when the difference in matching efficiency between platforms and traditional employers is significant. The fixed cost of entering the traditional sector tends to diminish productivity gains from increased matching efficiency at elevated levels. The entrance of platforms positively impacts overall employment, yet the effects on the employment and wages of those reliant on such jobs remain ambiguous. The impact on dependent employment and wages will be determined by the balance between the market expansion effect, where price decreases lead to increased production and labour demand, and the market substitution effect, where platform services replace traditional services. When worker-client matches are highly responsive to fluctuations in service demand, the positive impact may surpass the negative consequences of market replacement (Bishwakarma, Devkota and Bista, 2024).

Platform work challenges traditional self-employment, leading to decreased earnings for these workers. Platform workers are primarily drawn from traditionally self-employed individuals and those who are unemployed. Self-employed traditional workers experience a decline in income due to competition from online platforms, impacting their profitability (Nahata, 2024).

1.8 The Labour Market in the Gig Economy

The Fourth Industrial Revolution, characterised by technological progress, artificial intelligence, robotics, and digitalisation, is currently reshaping the labour market significantly (K. Kumar, 2024). The Fourth Industrial Revolution features the extensive adoption of digital technologies, notably the emergence of the digital platform economy (Bishwakarma, Devkota and Bista, 2024). Digital platforms have created online structures that facilitate various human activities and interactions. Platforms represent varied digital frameworks that influence social interactions and work dynamics, impacting production value chains and profit margins (K. Kumar, 2024).

Digital platforms utilising big data, AI, and cloud computing are transforming labour and the economy (Wood et al., 2018). Digital platforms primarily fall into two categories: capital platforms, such as Airbnb, which connects renters and sellers, and labour platforms, like Uber, which links clients with service providers for gig work or virtual employment. International platforms like Facebook and Google enhance the utility of advertising and e-commerce. Online platforms for job searching and payment have led to the emergence of the gig economy and various forms of non-traditional employment (Chawaria, 2024).

The gig economy encompasses a network of on-demand businesses and freelancers utilising internet marketplaces. Customers can connect with service providers and submit requests through the digital platform available on both web and mobile applications.

The platform enables gig workers to access requests, interact with clients, provide services, and receive payment (Bishwakarma, Devkota and Bista, 2024). The automation of routine tasks and the growth of digital marketplaces have reduced the demand for low-skilled workers while increasing the need for high-skilled professionals, resulting in a labour shortage. The gig economy offers opportunities for individuals with limited formal education or experience, thanks to digitalisation. A driver can complete an education program and obtain a license in less than two months. The presence of many low- and no-skilled young individuals indicates that the gig economy will significantly influence the region's labour market. Although entering the transportation gig economy is relatively easy, possessing essential digital skills remains crucial for success in the gig labour market (Ben Romdhane, Kammoun and Loukil, 2024).

1.9 The Triangular Relationships of Gig Workers in the Economy

The regulation of gig work is complex due to the interconnected roles of the digital platform, the consumer, and the worker. The worker creates or executes the service, while the end-user may be an individual customer or another company. The digital intermediary plays a vital role in enabling the entire process (Anand and Murthy, 2024).

The contract between the intermediary and the worker outlines the terms and conditions of the worker's role in the process. This usually involves giving the intermediary firm the power to manage, discipline, dismiss, or limit the worker's use of the platform. Typically, workers bear most, if not all, of the risks linked to providing essential equipment and tools, service disruptions, income fluctuations, termination of services, and other related factors. Demutualization of risk in the gig economy shifts primary risks onto workers, increasing their vulnerability and precariousness (Abdulrazaq and Lambe, 2024)

A contractual agreement governs the relationship between the intermediary and the service recipient. This agreement includes the standard terms and conditions that the user must accept to access the digital service or platform. This practice limits the intermediary's responsibilities and duties regarding potential issues that may occur during creation or distribution. It is often the case that end-users are not fully aware of how the contractual obligations of intermediaries limit their responsibilities (Abdulrazaq and Lambe, 2024).



Figure 1.1: Direct Selling. (Tan and Ouyang, 2003)

The relationship between gig workers and those they serve is often ambiguous. The outcome depends on the nature defined by authorities and the business model selected by intermediaries. Illustration: Uber asserts that its driver-partners, supported by technology, enter into agreements with their customers. Uber effectively controlled both the route taken and the fare charged, leading to the conclusion that the notion of drivers and customers forming binding agreements without knowing each other's identities was considered “absurd.”

This ruling's future on appeal is uncertain, and it does not ensure that the same standard will apply to the relationship between workers and end-users on different platforms. When the platform provider serves merely as a matchmaker, the details of the services and associated fees should be determined through negotiation between the worker and the end-user. This supports the idea that a real contract exists between the parties when it does occur; the distinction between a commercial contract and an employment agreement is a separate matter (Zhang, Sun and Ding, 2023).

1.10 Concept of Digital Labour Platforms

The term "platform" is used in various contexts. Platforms are often viewed as technological tools that enable communication, content creation and consumption, commerce, entertainment,

transportation, and various other activities in the digital space. These online activities not only simplify our lives but also influence societal structures (Mehta, 2023).

Digital marketplaces for non-traditional employment focus on services generated through human labour rather than physical goods. These services are exchanged for monetary compensation, with electronic management of service matching and administration. Delivery can be physical or virtual, and labour distribution and compensation are determined by a community of sellers and buyers within a market-based pricing framework (Poorhosseinzadeh *et al.*, 2023). Digital labour platforms encompass various services, including Urban Company, Ola, Zomato, Swiggy, Rapido, and Uber.

Digital labour marketplaces offer adaptability, efficiency, and economic benefits for employers and freelancers alike. Consequently, an increasing number of people are attracted to the flexibility provided by crowd work, cloud work, and gig labour as alternatives to conventional full-time jobs. The rise of precarious labour often coincides with the decline of legally and socially established standards for decent employment (Cordes and Marinova, 2023).

1.10.1 Characteristics of Digital Platforms

The lack of a consensus on the definition of a platform is understandable, given the novelty of the technology. Digital platforms exhibit distinct characteristics in how their conceptual modifications are perceived (Cordes and Marinova, 2023).

Intermediary:

Various entities, including workers, consumers, marketers, service providers, manufacturers, suppliers, and even physical objects, can interact through platforms.

Network Effects:

While traditional industrial firms gained prominence through supply-side economies of scale, platform business models are now driven by on-demand economies of scale. Network effects play a crucial role in the success of digital platforms, as they lead to a significant influx of new users (Zolotina, Kosareva and Chernykh, 2023).

Cross-subsidisation:

Consumers may not find the platform useful without available sellers, while employees may lack motivation if there are no tasks to complete. To address this issue, various platforms offer free or discounted signups to draw in new users (Yadav *et al.*, 2023).

Constant User Engagement:

Platforms employ a strategy of continuous user engagement to collect further information from their users (Wankhede, 2023).

Reduced Transaction Costs:

Developing digital platforms aims to encourage repeat transactions by reducing costs related to information search, price negotiation, and legal enforcement (Praveen, 2023).

Reputation System:

As customers engage with the platforms more frequently, their interactions tend to become increasingly standardised. Measures for these are created and are commonly known as “reputational scores” (Praveen, 2023). In today's digital economy, it is essential for customers and clients to use reputational scores to assess employees and establish reliability benchmarks.

Algorithmic Managerial Control:

Communication on digital platforms relies on the management of algorithms (Wood et al., 2019). Every action by users globally can be recorded, analysed, and managed in real-time through algorithms (Nahid *et al.*, 2023).

1.10.2. Types of Digital Labour Platforms

Cloud work refers to jobs that can be performed remotely without the need for physical presence, allowing for completion entirely online. Crowd labour refers to the assignment of a task to a large, informal group of individuals online instead of to one person. Crowd labour is referred to as “micro-tasking” when tasks are divided into very small components, each offering minimal financial compensation. In contrast, contest-based crowd work involves tasks that cannot be divided. Instead, a crowd completes the task redundantly and in parallel, with only one outcome being selected for compensation. Gig employment refers to work where an individual is tasked with completing a specific job at a designated location and time. Independent contractors have access to numerous location-based service options, each offering distinct benefits and drawbacks. Digital labour platforms can be categorised into six groups (Maity, 2023).

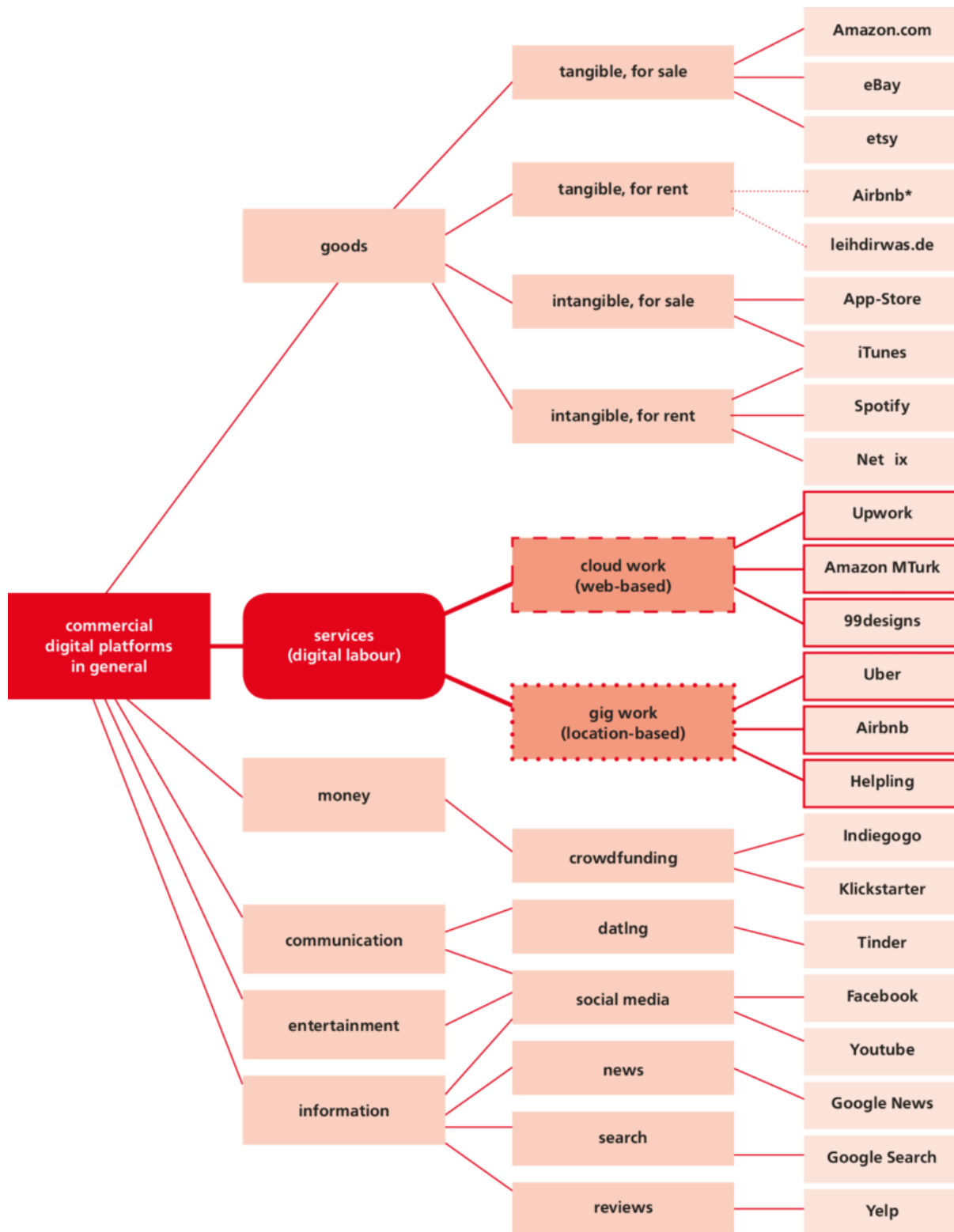


Figure 1.2: Digital Selling, Direct Selling, Gig Market. (Rao, 2005)

➤ **Cloud work (web-based digital labour)**

1. “Freelance marketplaces”
2. “Micro-tasking crowd work”

3. “Contest-based creative crowd work”

➤ **Gig work (location-based digital labour)**

1. “Accommodation”

2. “Transportation and delivery services (Gig work)”

3. “Household services and personal services (Digital Products Sellers)”

❖ **Platforms for Web-Based Services (Cloud Work)**

1. **Freelance Marketplaces**

The idea of outsourcing has shifted from businesses to individuals via freelance markets, often referred to as the online staffing sector or outsourcing marketplaces. Clients can post job opportunities, allowing freelancers from various countries to submit their proposals on the platform. Determining the applicable jurisdiction's laws is a complex issue when the three participants in the platform triangle are situated in different countries (Kaur *et al.*, 2023).

2. **Micro-Tasking (Crowd Work)**

Al-Ani and Stumpp (2015) classify commercial paid crowd work into two primary types: micro-tasking crowd work and contest-based creative crowd work. Micro-tasking is best understood as “cognitive piecework,” a term introduced by researcher Lilly Irani in the realm of crowd work. Luis von Ahn, a leader in micro-tasking, describes it as “human computation.” Micro-tasking involves distributing many small, repetitive tasks to a large, undefined group of crowd workers. The workers self-assign to tasks and are assumed to have a general lack of expertise regarding the specific task, allowing for interchangeable substitution (Wankhede, 2023).

Task execution is primarily automated, resembling a conveyor belt production system. Clients and crowd workers often keep their identities hidden during interactions. Many tasks focus on challenges in data processing, best tackled by human cognitive skills. The results of these tasks can be evaluated and gathered by a computer. Micro-tasking shares significant similarities with the methodologies outlined in Frederick Taylor's Scientific Management (Praveen, 2023).

3. **Contest-Based Creative Crowd Work**

In graphic design, particularly logo design, several online platforms facilitate labour organisation through contests. Since 2008, such sites have increased in number, with a notable example being an Australian platform located in Sydney. As of 2016, around 1.3 million individuals registered with 99designs. Approximately one million designs are uploaded to the site each month, equating to one design every 2.5 seconds. As of March 2016, the portal has

awarded €125 million across 500,000 contests. The average prize pool for each competition is 250 euros (Elshaiekh *et al.*, 2023).

Due to the community's typical submission of approximately 100 drawings per contest, the average compensation for each design amounts to just 2.50 euros. Clients engaging in contest-based creative crowd labour, rather than micro-tasking platforms or freelancing markets, seek optimal solutions from a varied community-generated pool tailored to their needs (Chibvura, Doba and Mupamhanga, 2023).

➤ **Gig Work (Location-Based Digital Labour)**

The rise of platforms for location-based digital work has largely been enabled by the widespread availability of GPS-enabled smartphones. These prerequisites are essential for coordinating work that occurs in specific urban locations rather than remotely. Recent years have seen gig work platforms attracting considerably more venture capital than cloud work platforms. As a result, their impact is more significant and can be more considerable, especially in the gig work areas of transportation and accommodation. These subcategories require considerable financial investment and greatly influence job availability. The implementation of regulatory measures in gig work can be expedited and improved more readily than in cloud work, as gig work is mainly regulated at the political level of individual cities (Chibvura, Doba and Mupamhanga, 2023).

• **Accommodation**

Founded in 2008 and based in Silicon Valley, Airbnb is the leading platform for private accommodations, available in over 34,000 locations globally. In October 2016, two major competitors, Wimdu and 9 Flats, merged and relocated their headquarters to Berlin, collectively offering listings for over 500,000 apartments. Short-term flat rentals have gained popularity globally compared to hotel stays. Most advertisements focus on popular tourist destinations. Airbnb offers a platform for locating short-term and intermediate housing options, such as spare rooms or entire apartments, when the owners are away. Airbnb's name merges “air mattress” with “bed and breakfast,” highlighting its focus on the personal and non-commercial experience of staying in someone else's home. A specialised sector has emerged where commercial hosts manage numerous apartments specifically for Airbnb rentals (Alkan, Güney and Kılınç, 2023).

• **Transportation and Delivery Services**

- **Mobility**

Uber has influenced how people view app-based taxi services. Launched in 2009, the start-ups reached a valuation of \$62.5 billion by 2016. The term "Uber" has become a symbol of the disruptive influence of platform firms, resonating with both supporters and critics alike. The phrase “the Uber for XYZ” is frequently used to market new apps or services for freelance or contract work, leading to the term “Uberization,” which refers to the adaptation of existing business models to this new framework. Lyft, its primary competitor, launched in 2012 and reached a valuation of US\$5.5 billion by 2016 (Barasa and Kiiru, 2023).

In 2015, General Motors, which invested in Lyft, acquired Sidecar, a competitor to Uber, and subsequently transformed it into the now-defunct food delivery service, Sidecar Eats. Haxi, a Norwegian taxi service, is entering the European market. Customers perceive Uber as offering superior service compared to traditional taxis. Customers can summon a car with a simple button press, allowing them to track the driver's exact location and identity (Alkan, Güney and Kılınç, 2023).

- **Delivery Services**

Grocery store and restaurant food delivery services share some similarities with digital labour platforms that enable transportation. The leading ride-sharing service is broadening its scope with new initiatives such as Uber-RUSH and Uber-EATS. Since 2016, this segment of the gig economy has experienced numerous start-ups, many of which have disappeared following acquisitions by larger competitors.

In Germany, several delivery-focused gig economy start-ups have emerged, paralleling the rise of Spoon Rocket, Yelp Eat24, Door-Dash, Instacart, and Postmates in the United States and Canada.

Significant investment from the publicly traded German start-up incubator Rocket Internet has been directed towards competing delivery companies. Notable German start-ups, often referred to as "unicorns," include Hello Fresh, based in Berlin, and Delivery Hero, both of which have valuations exceeding \$3 billion. Hello fresh utilises UPS for delivery, distinguishing it from gig labour models.

My Lorry, Pizza.de, Food-panda, Lie-Ferando (a subsidiary of Takeaway.com), Deliveroo, and Foodora (part of Delivery Hero) represent a selection of companies operating in this sector. While there may be numerous additional businesses, listing them all would be excessive, particularly given the limited solid information currently available on most of them. This

section will focus on the basics, using Deliveroo as a case study (Alkan, Güney and Kılınç, 2023).

- **Household Services and Personal Services**

In a private setting, the significance of faith, excellence, and consistency—particularly having the same individual perform the task—becomes even more pronounced compared to delivery services. Once more, media reports and discussions with platform providers and freelancers replace rigorous scholarly research on the gig economy. In the future, this grouping may need additional subdivisions. Helping and Book a Tiger, both established in 2014, are prominent platforms that connect individuals seeking cleaning services with providers. American platforms such as TaskRabbit, founded in 2008, and Handy.com, created in 2012, offer comparable services aimed at alleviating household chores for their users. Domestic services require a strong level of trust between clients and gig workers, even if neither is present during the service (Chandra, Dutta and Yeh, 2022).

Table 1.1: Comparison of various online jobs, including the gig workers and service providers (Kannabiran and Narayan, 2005)

Platform	Description of Platform	Examples of types of Work Offered
"Air-tasker"	Daily jobs posted on Air-tasker invite bids from taskers, who are defined by the poster along with specific requirements and budget constraints. Established in 2012.	Various clerical, administrative, cleaning, and handyman tasks.
"Mabel"	Mabel, previously called "Better Caring," is a platform designed to connect individuals in elderly care and disability sectors with care and support staff. Established in 2014.	Supportive care work involves providing assistance and compassion to those in need.
"Care.com"	Care.com serves as a platform connecting individuals seeking care with local providers. Established in 2016.	Cleaning, caregiving, pet care, handyman services, housekeeping, and childcare.
"Deliveroo"	Deliveroo is a platform that employs riders to deliver meals from nearby restaurants to customers' residences. Established in 2015.	"Food deliveries"
"Fiverr"	Freelancers can promote and offer their services for sale on Fiverr. Established in 2010.	Various fields include graphic design, digital marketing, writing and translation, video and animation design, music and audio design and production, and programming.
"Freelancer"	Freelancer serves as an online platform where users can post projects, inviting freelancers to submit their bids. Established in 2009.	Various roles include clerical work, administration, graphic design, translation and writing, digital marketing, video and animation design, programming, as well as music and audio design and production.
"Gumtree"	Gumtree serves as an online platform for individuals to post classified advertisements for the buying and selling of various products and services.	Various services include selling goods, babysitting, cleaning, and handyman tasks.
"Uber"	The Uber app links riders to drivers for shared rides, vehicle hailing, food delivery, and bike borrowing, among other services. Established in 2012.	food delivery, ride-sharing
"Upwork"	Upwork serves as a platform for individuals to post job opportunities that freelancers can respond to with bids. Established in 2015.	Various fields include administration, clerical work, graphic design, digital marketing, writing and translation, video and animation design, music and audio design and production, and programming.

1.11 Managing Platform Workers Through Effective Platform Design

In a digital labour marketplace, there are at least three key participants: purchasers (the platform's customers), service providers (independent workers), and the platform provider, who serves as an intermediary between the purchasers and service providers. The platform provider, serving as an intermediary, possesses full visibility and authority over the platform's data, procedures, and regulations (Yin and Choi, 2022).

Understanding the design of a digital platform is essential, as it includes its processes, mechanisms, functionalities, and rules. This architectural framework significantly influences key aspects of the platform, including client-worker interactions, power imbalances, worker independence and authority, operational capacity, effectiveness, and concerns regarding confidentiality and information security (Barasa and Kiiru, 2023).

Managing a digital platform is complex, rooted in its architectural design, as these elements influence the choices of both workers and clients regarding platform adoption and continued

use. The ability of a gig-based corporation to address two key HRM challenges is essential for the success of its digital labour platform business model (Alkan, Güney, and Kılınç, 2023).

Table 1.2: Services performed either virtually or physically.

Is the service fulfilled physically or virtually?			
Is the service Performed high-skill or low-skill?	Low skills	Physical (Local)	Virtual (Global)
	High skills		
	Low skills	• Uber, Lyft, Deliveroo (Transportation and delivery services) • TaskRabbit, helping (Household & Personal services)	• Fancy hands (Virtual assistant, Clerical & data entry) • MTurk, Click worker (Microwork)
	High skills	• Medi cast (MD house calls), Glam Squad, Take lessons (Specialized services)	• Freelancer.com, Upwork, labmate (Creative &/or technical freelance work)

Gig-based businesses face vulnerability as workers can readily transition between platforms or exit the organisation. A digital labour platform that struggles to attract and keep workers will ultimately lose appeal to customers and face long-term failure (Chandra, Dutta and Yeh, 2022).

Staff management presents a significant challenge for gig-based businesses. Platform gig workers, by definition, operate without a human supervisor, as their services are delivered entirely through an app or website (Yadav, 2022). Supervisors in traditional organisations are tasked with both overseeing employee performance and motivating their team members. Companies cannot depend on management supervision to organise, regulate, and motivate personnel when work is performed by independent individuals outside traditional office settings and standard work hours. Gig-based businesses, similar to other virtual organisations, depend on independent contractors to self-organise and motivate themselves to reach their goals (Wang *et al.*, 2022).

➤ **SDT (Self-Determination Theory) for Managing Platform Digital Labour**

The SDT offers a robust framework for exploring the factors that influence and shape individuals. Motives can be classified as intrinsic, where actions are driven by personal interest and satisfaction, or extrinsic, where actions are motivated by external rewards and recognition (Pal and Tripathi, 2022).

The original formulation of SDT positioned intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as opposites; however, the theory has evolved to recognise them as complementary aspects of a spectrum. This theory suggests that individuals can possess both extrinsic and intrinsic motivations for work. The gig economy clearly illustrates this phenomenon. Gig economy workers are motivated not only by financial incentives but also by the personal rewards they derive from their work. In North America, drivers for ride-hailing services such as Uber and Lyft utilise these apps for the flexibility they offer in scheduling and the opportunity to connect with new individuals (Pal, Thilaka and Kayal, 2022).

High-skilled workers, like their low-skilled counterparts, appreciate the flexibility and convenience of on-demand jobs, the opportunities for social interaction, and the recognition they gain as experts in their fields (Maya, 2022).

While both extrinsic and intrinsic motivations can enhance performance, leveraging the former presents unique benefits. Research indicates that intrinsic motivation is associated with improved mental health, increased work engagement, enhanced creativity, and better knowledge retention (Wang *et al.*, 2022).

Secondly, financial incentives fail to cultivate a lasting commitment to learning or a common set of values; they merely provide a short-term boost in behaviour. Extrinsic motivators lead to temporary changes in behaviour. Using external rewards in the workplace can harm employee autonomy, resulting in opportunistic actions and a disregard for important, non-rewarded job elements like organisational citizenship and knowledge sharing (Deci et al., 2017). It is reasonable to conclude that platform companies could gain advantages by fostering self-directed motivation in gig workers. Identifying the conditions that promote intrinsic motivation in this context is essential (Banu, 2022).

Self-Determination Theory posits that three core psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and belonging—drive behaviour (Deci & Ryan, 2000). People possess a fundamental need for autonomy, which can be understood as the desire to feel a sense of control over their actions. A sense of competence in achieving goals and fulfilling duties within social and physical contexts is a fundamental human need. The pursuit of connection reflects a deep

desire for authentic relationships, encompassing the need to be loved, cared for, and understood by others. The SDT posits that fulfilling these needs enhances individual motivation and happiness (Malhotra, Iyer, and Dave, 2022).

1.12 Overview of Hyperlocal Discovery Platform

Digital marketing has enabled businesses to connect with customers worldwide. Platforms like AdWords, Twitter, and Facebook provide accessible and affordable options for advertising and marketing services and products to a global audience. The common term used in the start-up community to connect with their local audience is “hyperlocal” (Kanchan, 2022).

A hyperlocal discovery platform combines digital and physical elements to address localised demand efficiently, delivering goods and services quickly. The hyperlocal concept encourages customers to use digital platforms for local purchases, helping to reinvest money into local retail businesses. This technology enables businesses to connect with customers in a particular geographic area or community for a defined purpose. In India, hyperlocal platforms are expanding their services to include various professions, such as beauticians, tutors, electricians, and plumbers (Kamal and Afrin, 2022).

Hyperlocal is not a new concept. Businesses thrived in the eras before television, the Internet, and print by relying on localised markets. Women could shop from home as local merchants, including saree and clothing dealers, delivered their products directly to their doorstep. Technological advancements have enabled humans to shift their perspective on hyperlocal marketplaces, yet these platforms largely remain unchanged. The precise moment of the local discovery model's inception remains elusive, yet its popularity surged in 2015 (Kamal and Afrin, 2022).

The report “India Hyperlocal Market Outlook to 2020” indicates a 41% sales increase in 2018 and forecasts the hyperlocal industry will reach \$19.1 billion by 2020. While hyperlocal strategies are viewed as a promising approach to enhance local businesses, implementing this concept can be quite challenging. The market for on-demand services and niche products has developed slowly; however, entrepreneurs and investors are starting to recognise its potential. Advancements in technology, such as Wi-Fi Direct, Near Field Communications, Bluetooth Low Energy, and enhanced Global Positioning Systems, have opened this market to businesses (Kamal and Afrin, 2022).

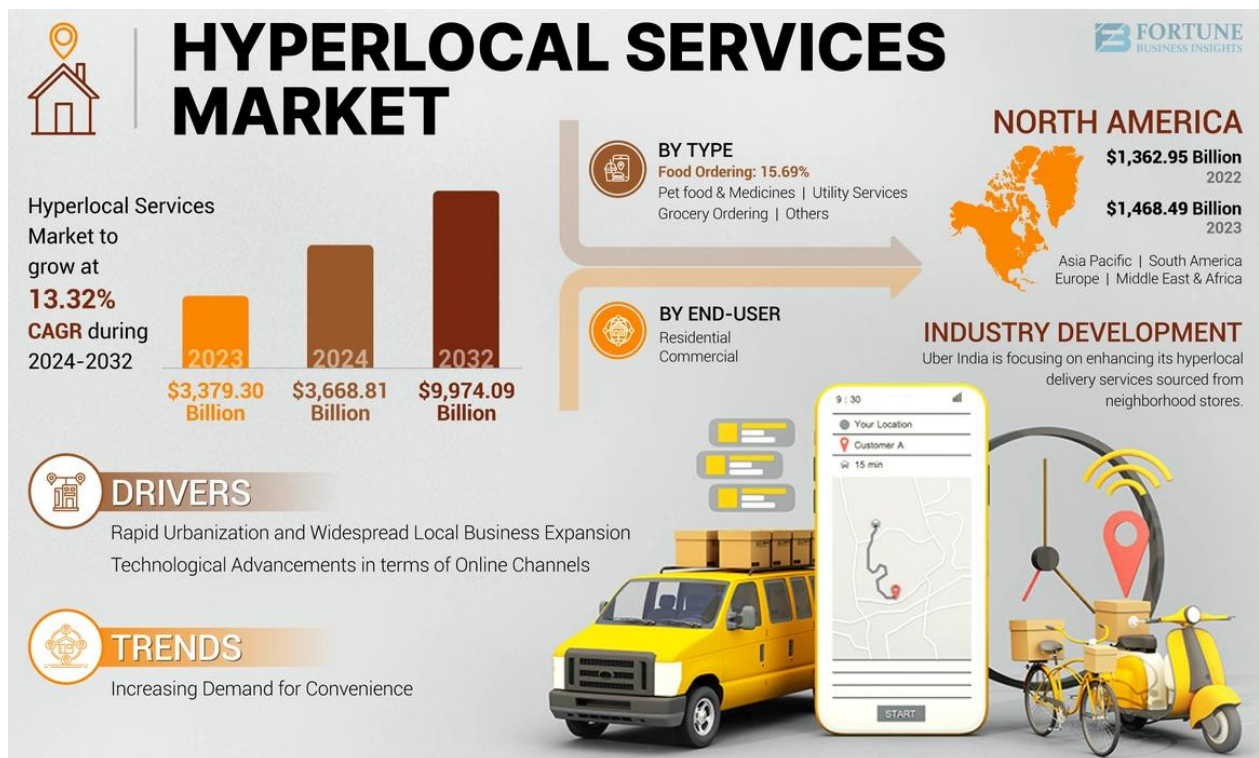


Figure 1.3: Hyperlocal Market Services. (Pal and Tripathi, 2022)

➤ How does it help?

Indian families are already well-acquainted with the "hyperlocal context," indicating significant potential for growth in this sector within the country. Local merchants, retailers, and service providers frequently become familiar figures in the community. The behaviour of individuals has attracted investors to fund this concept and establish new companies. Local discovery platforms offer various benefits for both businesses and consumers. This discussion focuses on a select few (Bosson *et al.*, 2022).

- i. Local shops and service providers expressed concerns about the potential threat posed by large retail chains and online marketplaces to their survival. Local search engines have positively impacted small businesses.
- ii. Small businesses can establish an online presence without the need for costly developers or significant financial investment. They should partner with one of the many existing hyperlocal enterprises in the area.
- iii. It requires local companies to uphold high standards, implement efficient delivery methods, and ensure complete price and service accountability to their clients, enabling them to shop and secure the best deal. Service industry clients, including those in plumbing and repair, will find this beneficial.

- iv. It motivates local businesses to consistently enhance the quality of their products and services by ensuring that their only competition is other similarly sized local firms.
- v. Users can now conveniently order groceries and plumbing services and even plan parties directly from their smartphones. (Gulabdin *et al.*, 2022)

1.12.1 Phases of Hyperlocal Model

The hyperlocal model consists of four essential steps: Services, Communication, Delivery, and Transaction. All key players and their departments are included across these four stages. The viability of hyperlocal commerce within a specific population influences the importance of each stage, making it essential to monitor their progression (Deshmukh, Sehgal, and Kumar, 2022).

1) Services

The service phase requires a decision on whether to offer the service through a dedicated app or utilise existing platforms such as WhatsApp or Twitter. A brief demographic analysis and needs assessment survey are included as well. Evaluating customer preferences and spending habits is essential for understanding the anticipated collection of hyperlocal services, along with the typical activity cycle of each service. If it is near the source of revenue, it indicates that individuals are actively utilising the service. Staying informed about recent technological advancements is essential for delivering outstanding customer service. AI's application is a recent advancement in this area. Artificial intelligence (AI) can enhance corporate operations by increasing efficiency and predicting client behaviour through their purchasing patterns (Cueto *et al.*, 2022). This information will assist the customer in making their final purchase decision. These enhancements can support local businesses in boosting their sales.

2) Transaction

In the hyperlocal framework, the transaction plays a vital role. Enhancing the quality of transactions is essential for revitalising the hyperlocal economy. It is essential for users to experience a sense of safety and comfort throughout the transaction process. Thus, incorporating the transaction procedure into the program is essential. The program should include precise connections among users overseeing the process. The proposed strategy for the transaction in a three-tier application, which includes a browser, web server, and database, aims to enhance the algorithm to manage multiple clients and their simultaneous requests effectively. The security of e-transactions is ensured through the comprehensive reliability of the three-tier application, as elaborated upon. Web service transactions gained popularity with the introduction of web services, utilising the Semantic Hierarchy Transaction Model (SHTM) to

enhance concurrency by permitting data dependencies across transactions (Charles, Xia, and Coutts, 2022). The two-tier commit processing technique was described to meet the semantic property requirements of web service transactions. With the rise of internet access, mobile transactions have begun to develop.

The ongoing movement of mobile phones posed challenges for mobile transactions, including disconnections and reliance on location (Frank, 2008). Enhancing mobile host availability requires that mobile transactions meet the ACID criteria: Atomicity, Consistency, Isolation, and Durability. Using the IP addresses of mobile or Service-Orientated Architecture (SOA) services may address the disconnection and location dependency challenges associated with distributed atomic transactions. Users are likely to trust our hyperlocal technology more after we create a comprehensive model of the transaction (Bosson *et al.*, 2022).

3) Communication

The communication system in a hyperlocal context facilitates information exchange among the different participants, including users and interactive systems. This type of communication has multiple applications. These enable engagement between the software users and the service provider. These can facilitate community members in voicing their opinions and highlighting significant issues.

This localised communication system enables the community magazine or newspaper to stay informed about current events. The software model should incorporate an effective communication method between automated components and users. Clear communication channels must exist among those managing each task (Banu, 2022). System actors' capacity to exchange essential information will be limited by these boundaries.

The concurrent movement-based connection ensures ongoing communication among participants. Due to simultaneous mobility, software actors can notify their neighbours of an upcoming relocation through messaging. During the movement task, each actor creates a branching path to its adjacent actor. The actor's behaviour reflects a pursuit of meaningful connections (Bacasmás, Carlos and Katigbak, 2022).

4) Delivery

The delivery phase has become essential. Companies must continually innovate methods for delivering their products to consumers. Hyperlocal businesses compete to offer the fastest and most cost-effective delivery of their products and services. Vehicle Routing Problems fall under the larger umbrella of Pickup and Delivery Problems (PDP), aiming to identify the most cost-effective routes for package delivery. To address this ongoing issue, advancements in

technology continually seek to develop better and more efficient algorithms tailored to current delivery demands.

Yanfang Ma suggests that logistics services between pickup and delivery locations should account for the interactions among various decision-makers in reverse logistics, addressing challenges in vehicle routing (Bacasma, Carlos, and Katigbak, 2022). Bent and Van Hentenryck proposed a two-stage hybrid method in 2006. The first phase aimed to reduce the total number of available routes, while the second phase focused on minimising transportation costs (Azu, 2022). This algorithm minimises the required delivery vehicles to cut costs, but it is applicable only to specific businesses with client bases of 100, 200, or 600.

1.13 Concept of App-Based Approach of Hyperlocal Discovery Platforms

App-based hyperlocal discovery platforms connect users with nearby businesses, services, and events through mobile applications. These platforms utilise GPS technology to determine the user's precise location and provide personalised recommendations based on their closeness. Specialised mobile applications allow individuals to easily access a variety of localised information and services efficiently. The applications allow users to search and filter, facilitating the exploration of specific categories or curated recommendations (Asore, 2022). These platforms allow users to assess and rate their experiences, helping others make informed decisions. Additionally, app-based hyperlocal discovery platforms often enable in-app transactions, reservations, and bookings, which increases user convenience. Integrating features like push notifications, community involvement, and exclusive incentives enhances user engagement and fosters a sense of connection within the local community. App-based technology significantly transforms how users discover, engage with, and support local businesses and services (Yadav, 2021).

➤ Key Elements of an App-based Approach of Hyperlocal Discovery Platforms

Mobile Application:

Mobile applications for tablets and smartphones serve as the main platforms for hyperlocal discovery systems. These programs are designed for ease of use, enabling individuals to easily locate local services or gig workers. (Ünver and Alkan, 2021)

Geolocation and Mapping:

Geolocation services enable platforms to accurately identify a user's location, providing tailored search results and suggestions that align closely with their needs. Users can locate their desired gig workers or service providers through mapping features (Tsukamoto and Dua, 2021).

Service Categories and Listings:

To assist customers in swiftly locating their desired services and gig jobs, app-based platforms categorise the various options available. Services can vary widely, including those for the home, such as plumbing and cleaning; individual services like beauty and fitness; and professional offerings such as consulting and tutoring. Service providers and gig workers are categorised and presented with profiles, ratings, and reviews (Othman *et al.*, 2021).

Ratings and Reviews:

Application-based hyperlocal discovery platforms fundamentally allow users to assess and evaluate service providers or gig workers. This feedback mechanism helps users make informed decisions by considering the experiences and opinions of previous customers. Ratings and reviews are crucial for building trust and creating a reputable image on the platform (Yin and Choi, 2022).

Real-time Communication:

Many platforms feature integrated chat functions, enabling consumers to quickly and directly reach out to the service providers or gig workers they employ. Prior to engaging with the services, customers can discuss their specific needs, negotiate terms, and pose enquiries (Mehta, 2023).

Booking and Payment:

Hyperlocal discovery platforms in apps provide users with a seamless booking and payment system integrated within the application. Individuals can schedule appointments, confirm reservations, and carry out secure financial transactions using various payment methods, ensuring a convenient and seamless experience (Singh and Baghel, 2021).

➤ **Benefits of an App-Based Approach to Hyperlocal Discovery Platforms**
Convenience and Accessibility: Hyperlocal discovery platforms enable consumers to swiftly find and connect with local services or gig workers using their mobile devices. It eliminates the necessity for tedious research or physical telephone directories (Othman *et al.*, 2021).

Localisation and Personalisation: The platforms focus on specific regions or communities, providing customers with tailored hyperlocal options that meet their needs. This localisation ensures that consumers can easily access services or gig workers nearby, enhancing productivity and reducing travel time (Deshmukh, Sehgal, and Kumar, 2022).

Enhanced Trust and Transparency: The rating, review, and user feedback features of app-based platforms enhance trust and openness in the selection process. Feedback from previous users suggests that individuals can improve their decision-making when engaging with new service providers or gig workers (Nade, 2021).

Efficient Communication and Coordination: The app allows users to easily contact service providers or gig workers through its integrated messaging system. This streamlines coordination by allowing consumers to articulate their needs while enabling providers to address any questions that may come up (Pal, Thilaka, and Kayal, 2022).

Secure and Convenient Payments: App-based platforms often incorporate secure payment gateways, offering users a safe and convenient way to make digital payments for services rendered. This system eliminates the need for physical currency exchanges and creates a reliable framework for financial transactions (Nasreen and Purohit, 2018).

➤Market Stats of Hyperlocal Apps

This discussion will outline the implications for investors considering funding hyperlocal service applications (Muralidharan, Paul, and Basole, 2021).

- 1) In 2021, hyperlocal delivery apps generated a total revenue of \$952.7 million. Projections suggest a need to reach a financial goal of around US \$8856.6 million by 2032 (Cordes and Marinova, 2023).
- 2) The India Brand Equity Foundation projects that the Indian e-commerce market will grow significantly, reaching a value of \$200 billion by 2026. This growth is anticipated to positively influence the hyperlocal market services sector (Cordes and Marinova, 2023).
- 3) The hyperlocal services industry was valued at \$1.435 billion in 2022 and is expected to grow to \$4.635 billion by 2028. The anticipated growth is projected to be fueled by a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 19.6% between 2023 and 2028 (Prameswari *et al.*, 2020).

1.14 Famous App-Based Hyperlocal Startups in India

Zomato: This mobile application assists users in discovering new restaurants for food delivery. This tool allows users to order from nearby restaurants. The mobile app is compatible with both Android and iOS platforms (Agarwal, 2019).

DoorDash: An application enabling users to order meals for delivery. The website offers an easy method to find restaurants, grocery stores, and quick-stop options for on-demand delivery and pickup. Users can explore restaurants and book reservations through its online services for alcoholic beverages. In 2023, the corporation reported annual sales of \$7.16 billion, alongside a net loss of \$1.36 billion (Tracxn.com, 2023).

Swiggy: A platform offering delivery services for food, groceries, and parcels. The app allows users to order from nearby restaurants and track their food delivery time. The supermarket section of the platform provides a delivery service for food, cleaning supplies, and essential retail items. Swiggy Genie offers local package delivery services for consumers and businesses alike (S. Kumar, 2024).

Shadowfax: A delivery service application that operates on a business-to-business-to-consumer model. Users can schedule same-day, next-day, and recurring deliveries for meals, groceries, online purchases, clothing, and comprehensive forwarding services. Various businesses can gain advantages from the platform. It offers immediate tracking for the delivery of e-commerce packages across cities (Prieur *et al.*, 2024).

Glint: Founded in 2019, Glint is an online company based in India that focuses on consumer needs. This platform utilises mobile technology to provide washing, detailing, and repair services for automobiles directly at the customer's location (Cilliers *et al.*, 2024).

Jugnoo: Jugnoo aims to lead in hyper-local transportation using auto-rickshaws. Given the existing presence of rickshaws and the drivers' need for supplementary income, this business model is financially viable in India and does not demand a significant initial investment (Namjoshi, 2018).

Cred-R: Cred-R leverages technology and efficient processes to enhance accessibility in India's second-hand motorcycle market. Cred-R operates as a comprehensive ecosystem for the used two-wheeler market, where the team continually seeks innovative methods to enhance service delivery and increase value for customers. The company offers a robust platform for buying and selling used cars, aiming to address common disputes faced by buyers and sellers.

The objective is clear: to position Cred-R as the most trusted consumer brand in the used two-wheeler market (Walters, 2001).

1.15 Motivational Factors in the Gig Economy

Research on entrepreneurial motivation and entrepreneurship has received considerable academic attention recently. Despite its advancements, entrepreneurship as a field has encountered criticism on multiple fronts. A significant critique highlights the inclination to depict entrepreneurship as a positive and sought-after economic activity (Malhotra, Iyer, and Dave, 2022). Moreover, concerns have been raised about the treatment of women in entrepreneurship research, with a focus more on individual entrepreneurs rather than the entrepreneurship (Deshmukh, Sehgal, and Kumar, 2022). It is essential to critically examine the motivational factors driving entrepreneurship in the gig economy.

Entrepreneurs differ from gig workers primarily in that entrepreneurship is inherently a long-term pursuit. Traditionally, the development of a successful firm and long-term employment have been linked to entrepreneurs. Research on entrepreneurial activity often focuses on market opportunities, where entrepreneurs recognise and leverage prospects for future goods and services (Shane et al., 2000). However, this focus does not always align with the needs of the gig economy. Given these contextual variations, certain motivational factors for entrepreneurship may not apply to high-skill gig workers. Conversely, it is plausible that additional factors, not previously identified as significant for entrepreneurs, may greatly influence the motivation of gig workers. There is a need for a starting point due to the limited research on the gig economy and the motivating factors within this context. Research on entrepreneurial motivation serves as an excellent foundation for exploring motivation within the gig economy, as both entrepreneurs and gig workers share the characteristics of self-employment, highlighting their commonalities. It is essential to uphold a critical perspective consistently (Singh, Jayashankar, and Singh, 2001).

1.15.1 Overview of Motivational Factors

The independence associated with freelancing is a significant attraction for numerous individuals. Gig work allows individuals to determine their own schedules and select assignments that align with their preferences. Individuals pursuing work-life balance and autonomy value the ability to determine their own hours, location, and workload (Walters, 2001).

- The gig economy offers the potential for higher earnings and increased income opportunities. Freelancing may offer individuals with marketable skills or relevant experience a higher income potential compared to traditional employment. Individuals often engage in gigs to supplement their income, allowing them to save for future needs or invest in their enterprises (Koenig, Wigand, and Beck, 2002).
- Independent contractors often appreciate the chance to apply their skills across diverse tasks. Researchers can apply their expertise in ways that resonate with their interests, engaging in projects that genuinely captivate them. Gig workers often engage in various projects, allowing them to expand and enhance their skills (López-Bassols, 2002).
- Workers in the gig economy often explore diverse opportunities, gaining experience across various fields. Individuals who prefer flexibility in their career choices and possess a variety of skills and interests may find this diversity appealing. Engaging in multiple projects simultaneously maintains a dynamic and stimulating work environment (López-Bassols, 2002).
- The motivation for many independent contractors stems from their desire to be their own boss. Gig labour offers individuals the freedom to create their own businesses or personal brands while maintaining a source of income. Gig work can provide freelancers with valuable experience, foster connections, and potentially lead to the establishment of their own businesses (Tan and Ouyang, 2003).
- Digital labour platforms facilitate communication and community building among gig workers. Individuals sharing common interests can connect and receive support through these platforms. Gig workers often seek connection and community, finding motivation in collaborative projects, client meetings, and professional interactions (Lane, 2011).
- Freelancing offers individuals the flexibility to engage in work that aligns with their genuine passions and personal fulfilment. They can engage in opportunities that align with their values and interests. When an individual's career aspirations align with their personal passions, they often find increased job satisfaction (Jacobs and Slaus, 2011).
- Geographic independence allows gig workers to benefit from location flexibility, thanks to the digital labour platforms they often utilize. This appeals to individuals seeking flexibility, allowing them to work remotely from home or while travelling. (Mishra and Aditya, 2011)

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

A literature review summarises previously published information on a subject. The phrase may denote either a comprehensive educational assignment or a particular excerpt from a singular work, such as a novel or essay. The literature review aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the extensive information previously developed on the subject (Van Lange Paul and Liebrand, 2015). A thorough literature review can confirm the suitability of a research subject, conceptual framework, and study technique. A literature review offers the reader context and situates the current research within related academic disciplines. The review generally precedes the sections detailing the work's methods and results. Graduate and postgraduate students often conduct literature reviews when preparing their thesis, dissertation, or journal article.

A literature review is crucial for the effective execution of any research study. It enhances the researcher's knowledge and promotes a thorough understanding of the latest studies on the topic. It also helps in facilitating, demonstrating, and developing a clear understanding of recent advancements in the field. This enables the researcher to evaluate the current research landscape on the topic and pinpoint unexplored areas, thereby aiding in the identification of research gaps. A literature review aims to improve readers' understanding of a specific subject or field of study. This is accomplished by enhancing their comprehension of current research and discussions relevant to the topic and then articulating this understanding in a written format (Lane, 2011).

This literature review aims to assess the current research landscape and pinpoint knowledge gaps via critical evaluation.

2.2 Literature Review on the Digital India Programme on E-Commerce and Direct Selling Business

Gunasekaran et al. (2020) provide a comprehensive perspective on electronic business within organisational frameworks, defining it in terms of transactions and illustrating its pervasive influence across all business sectors (Ageron, Bentahar, and Gunasekaran, 2020). The paper differentiates between the advancements introduced by earlier web applications, such as email and electronic information exchange, and the significant transformations brought about by web technologies in manufacturing, marketing, purchasing, design, production, sales, distribution,

warehousing, and human resource management. Web-based innovations have enabled organisations to shorten development, purchasing, and procurement processes; maintain current product and market information; significantly accelerate communications; and enhance the quality of client relationships through close contact and continuous communication. The paper examines the significance of online advancements in various business operations, thereby enhancing their efficiency through effective B2B e-commerce (Choudhury and Srikanth, 2014).

Rao (2005) noted a correlation between online purchasing and the availability of information about vendors. He suggested that increased information would enhance respondents' comfort levels with online transactions (Rao, 2005).

Rakesh and Khare (2011) conducted a survey involving 325 college students from Indian universities. The findings indicate that Indian students' motivation for online shopping is influenced by utilitarian value, attitudes towards online purchasing, information availability, and hedonic values. Male college students exhibit a higher quality mindset regarding online purchasing compared to female college students (Nahid *et al.*, 2023).

Awais and Samin (2012) identify comprehensiveness, low operational costs, enhanced customer engagement, and efficiency as key characteristics of e-commerce. However, they also emphasise the necessity for organisations to adapt to the evolving environment and continuously improve to provide better value for clients (Aggarwal, 2021).

Mitra (2013) highlights the importance of online business, asserting that it represents the future of purchasing and shopping. The public authority must provide legal support to enable businesses to expand their perspectives and adopt new innovative technologies and strategic policies, along with secured transactions (Bala and Verma, 2018).

Raghunath and Panga (2013) provide a comprehensive analysis of the intricacies of online business, highlighting that contemporary business activities, including advertising, requests, and distribution, can be conducted within the digital ecosystem. The paper outlines various aspects of the significance of e-commerce that contribute to its emergence as a new paradigm. It has facilitated the development and manipulation of new business opportunities, while simultaneously enhancing customer involvement in the advancement of new products and services. Online business has not only limited the visibility of internal leadership but has also improved customer relations through a strategy fundamentally based on data sharing. The

receptiveness of web accessibility and other electronic devices presents yet another surprise (Banu, 2022).

Madhukar Sarode (2015) concluded in his paper that e-commerce represents the future of purchasing, significantly narrowing the gap between producers and consumers through electronic trade. E-commerce in India has significant potential; however, challenges arise due to vulnerable cyber regulations (Madhukar Sarode and Bagale, 2019).

Das & Ara (2015) indicate that while online travel and hotel bookings continue to dominate the e-commerce market, their share has declined over the years due to the recent expansion and rise of e-tailing services. There was a significant increase in investment in this sector. As Western e-commerce markets reach saturation, investors recognise significant potential in the Indian market, prompting numerous ventures to secure funding from venture capitalists and private equity firms (Ghare, 2025).

PIB (Press Information Bureau, India), “E-Commerce: Role of E-Commerce in Today's Business,” elucidates the extensive implications of internet business, distinguishing it from E-business. The paper examines various internet business models, including B2B, B2C, B2G, and C2C, providing a detailed analysis of each (PIB, 2024).

Rina (2016) discusses the various applications of web-based business in “Challenges and Future Scope of E-commerce in India,” while also defining their functionality within the country (Raina *et al.*, 2018).

Sethi and Wadhawan (2016) assert that retailers must systematically expand beyond their borders to align with the new digital business era. Digitalisation is no longer a choice; it has become a necessity for all retailers. This may involve altering strategies, consolidating innovative theories, and staying informed about new advancements (Sethi, 2021).

Rajasekar and Agrawal (2016) describe E-commerce as a paradigm shift. This innovation is fundamentally altering conventional business practices. Electronic commerce represents a business model or a segment within a broader business framework, facilitating transactions over electronic networks, primarily the internet. E-commerce refers to the transaction of goods and services, as well as the transfer of funds or data, via an electronic network, predominantly the internet. Business transactions can be categorised as business-to-business, business-to-consumer, consumer-to-consumer, or consumer-to-business. The term e-tail refers to transaction processes associated with online retail. E-commerce utilises various applications,

including email, fax, online catalogues, shopping carts, electronic data interchange (EDI), file transfer protocol, and web services. This can be considered a more sophisticated version of catalogue-based mail order purchasing. E-commerce refers to the transition of commercial activities to the internet. E-commerce impacts various business domains, including customer service and product design (Kumar, 2019).

Shahjee (2016) asserts that internet businesses provide a platform for organisations to showcase diverse products, facilitating easier access for consumers to quickly find items of interest, a task that was considerably more challenging through traditional marketing methods. Nonetheless, online business is facing numerous challenges related to infrastructural capabilities and the lack of computer and internet knowledge among consumers, particularly in rural areas (Kannan, Kumar, and Lakshmi, 2020).

Shettar (2016) emphasised the necessity for organisations to possess accurate information and understanding of the legal system, as well as potential issues and risk management. The emerging e-commerce sector in India has attracted the attention of global players. The rise in SMEs, FDI, and MNCs has led to an increase in job opportunities for consumers, thereby enhancing their purchasing power (Deshmukh, Sehgal, and Kumar, 2022).

Chatterjee's (2008) study found that e-commerce has significantly transformed the global business landscape, redefining the commercial environment by altering the dimensions of space and time, and reshaping the concept of business management. India, with its large population and growing number of consumers, is poised to become a key player in the e-commerce landscape (Chatterjee, 2008).

Kaur (2016) conducted research on customer relationship management. She aimed to examine the CRM policies implemented by various companies. She argued that the primary challenge for management in today's globalised world is to serve and nurture strong relationships with customers. Today marks a significant transformation. These changes have shifted producers from traditional marketing to a modern approach that encompasses more than just product development, pricing, promotion, and accessibility for customers. The researcher has examined the CRM policies implemented by three companies: Apple Inc., Amazon, and BMW. A key recommendation is to restructure the marketing department to foster closer relationships with customers through personnel, technology, and processes. Organisations must consistently seek methods to create value (Oláh *et al.*, 2018).

Thilagavathi (2017) indicates that the Digital India initiative is a positive move towards achieving its established goals. There are specific challenges related to implementing this advancement. Therefore, certain prerequisites are necessary. This project represents a significant initiative by the Indian government. Historically, India has pursued ambitious projects and plans; however, the execution has often been slow. The Digital India initiative has garnered considerable positive attention. Digital education stands to gain significantly from this initiative (Iddris, 2012).

Kalia, Kaur, and Singh (2017) concluded that India ranks as the third largest kingdom by net customers. India is set to enhance e-commerce in the Asia Pacific region, following China and Indonesia. The research indicates significant potential for growth in digital commerce within India (Saurav, 2025).

Upadhyay et al. (2017) demonstrate that a growing number of individuals are increasingly engaging with online shopping platforms and expressing a strong interest in purchasing products via the internet. This study examines consumer behaviour regarding online shopping patterns in Mumbai, focusing on the evolution of this shopping method. The author examines key factors like reliable payment methods, pricing, trust, discounts, and secure delivery systems, using basic graphics to highlight certain customer attributes in Mumbai city (Maya, 2022).

Kumar et al. (2017) suggest that the world has shifted from being knowledge savvy to techno-knowledge savvy. Resources should be accessible with a single click. The Digital India program includes several initiatives aimed at transforming India into a knowledge economy while enhancing governance for citizens through coordinated efforts across the government. Digital refers to electronic technology that generates, stores, and processes data. A virtual central repository stores the information, allowing access anytime and anywhere via established protocols. Digital technologies encompass cloud computing and mobile applications. The Digital India initiative aims to engage and integrate the Indian economy into a knowledge-driven global landscape. The program aims to advance India towards a knowledgeable future by integrating central technology to facilitate a transformative approach across various departments (Kumar, 2019).

Arpita and Nilu (2011) reported that citizens can access government services electronically through enhanced online infrastructure and improved internet connectivity. The vision of Digital India encompasses advancements in electronics services, products, manufacturing, and

job-oriented initiatives. Digital technologies, such as mobile applications and cloud computing, play a crucial role in fostering economic growth and empowering Indian citizens globally. This paper examines the concept of Digital India and its effects on Indian society (Mukherjee, 2011).

According to Shekhar (2017), the Digital India program is essential for overcoming challenges that hinder its successful implementation, such as digital illiteracy, inadequate infrastructure, slow internet speeds, lack of interdepartmental coordination, and taxation issues. Proper implementation will create new opportunities for citizens, necessitating significant effort and commitment from both government departments and the private sector, given the program's current status (Zolotina, Kosareva, and Chernykh, 2023).

Chandra (2017) explored the long-anticipated 'Digital India' mission launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It was initially introduced as the National E-Governance Plan (NeGP). The mission aims to establish governance that is participative, transparent, and responsive, engaging citizens to enhance electronic services and promote digital literacy in India. Digital technologies, including cloud computing and mobile applications, serve as key drivers for economic growth and citizen empowerment. The paper seeks to explore the concept of Digital India, examine government initiatives, assess their impact, and identify potential solutions. This study utilised historical and observational methods. This study utilises secondary data. Academic perspectives, discussions, and articles in diverse journals and magazines have contributed to the conceptual description. This research aims to clarify the concept of Digital India, its applications, and its effects on the Indian economy (Chandra, Dutta, and Yeh, 2022).

Dua (2017) noted that Digital India is an initiative that encourages public engagement in the innovation process essential for economic progress. Implementing this poses a significant challenge. Numerous challenges hinder successful implementation, including digital illiteracy, inadequate infrastructure, slow internet speeds, poor interdepartmental coordination, and taxation issues. Addressing these challenges is essential to unlock the full potential of this program. It demands significant effort and commitment from both government departments and the private sector. Proper implementation could create numerous opportunities for the nation's citizens (Som *et al.*, 2018).

Sheokand Karamvir and Gupta Neha (2017) noted that digitalisation enhances the effectiveness and efficiency of work. The digitalisation of governance, such as e-governance, improves citizens' quality of life by fostering greater transparency in government departments and

streamlining service delivery. It enhances efficiency and minimises the time needed for various tasks and functions. Reducing costs and expanding market reach can improve profit margins and, consequently, increase returns in various sectors. Automating the agricultural sector minimises uncertainties and enhances the efficient use of resources. Industry automation enhances product design and boosts profit margins, fostering healthy competition and sector growth. The digitalisation of services enhances customer satisfaction and improves service quality through timely and broader service delivery. The digitalisation of the service sector presents significant opportunities for its development and growth. Digitalisation significantly influences the employment landscape in the country. To transition the Indian economy from developing to developed status, significant efforts are required; promoting and enhancing digitalisation is a crucial step in this direction. It is essential to address and eliminate barriers to facilitate digitalisation. The effective execution of the Digital India initiative will enhance agricultural returns per capita, improve the cost-output ratio of industrial production, and elevate service quality. This fosters transparency across systems and processes, ultimately enhancing quality of life (Sharma and Gupta, 2003).

Kumar (2017) explores how digital technology has transformed the world. Since the 1990s, the introduction of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in India has brought numerous benefits to many, yet these advantages should not be limited to a select few. Digital technology serves as an inclusive medium, offering equal assistance and opportunities to individuals regardless of gender. Digital technology has been utilised more efficiently by both the government and civil society to address the gender gap in India (Kumar *et al.*, 2018).

Mahawar (2018) explores the various phases of the internet from 1995 to the present. The study concludes that significant progress is expected in the coming years, contingent upon legal security and e-commerce, which will facilitate the expansion of both domestic and international trade (Mahawar *et al.*, 2021).

Kumar (2018) discusses the anticipated fourfold growth of e-commerce by 2021 compared to 2015. The primary drivers of this growth include the rise in internet users and smartphone adoption, increased public awareness, improved internet services, the digitalisation of various initiatives supported by the government, the entry of new business players and foreign investors, and enhanced payment options for consumers. However, it is crucial for the government to establish an appropriate legal framework and address challenges to facilitate development (Kumar *et al.*, 2018).

Mehta (2018) explores how digitalisation, or digital transformation, encompasses more than merely adopting cloud, social, mobile, or big data technologies. This involves leveraging technology to generate new value or transform existing business models. Digitally transformed businesses often foster an ecosystem that engages all market participants and consumers. The campaign sought to link rural areas to high-speed internet and enhance digital literacy. The rapid growth of the Indian economy necessitates that individual become financially literate to make informed decisions. Following this digital transformation, financial transactions must now be conducted online. Digital financial literacy is increasingly significant (Mehta, 2023).

Luvy (2018) noted that the Digital India program aims to transform the nation into a digitally enabled society and a learning economy. The Digital India initiative aims to ensure that government services are readily accessible to citizens online, thereby minimising the need for paperwork. The implementation of electronic service delivery would enhance responsibility and transparency by introducing a Unique ID and E-Pramaan, ensuring credible, standardised, and interoperable government applications and information systems. This study aims to highlight the impact of Digital India by 2019. The program offers various possibilities for the nation's general population (Yadav, 2021).

Ritu and Khurana Anil (2018) suggest that enhancing mobile connectivity and internet access can significantly boost India's growth in the digital landscape. This paper aims to explore the concept and benefits of Digital India, the services introduced through the initiative, its future potential, and the challenges faced in implementing the program. India aims to enhance its Information Technology framework through the Digital India programme, seeking to achieve extensive reach via e-Governance and e-Service initiatives globally. A digital interface benefits both the government and the public. This scheme aims to digitally empower every family and individual in India (Yadav, 2021).

According to Dimpal (2018), Indian villages lag significantly behind urban areas in India. We are entering an era defined by the knowledge economy. The rise of smartphone usage enables the provision of various services with a single click. This paper explores the impact of Digital India on empowering rural communities, addressing challenges, and suggesting initiatives to enhance effectiveness. The goal is to bridge the urban-rural digital divide and ensure that villages benefit from the global digital revolution (Bhanver and Bhanver, 2017).

Anita and Nandini (2018) analysed Digital India through a gender lens, assessing its impact on women's empowerment and gender equality. Digital India has become a widely recognised

term that serves as a boundary object. It is flexible in meaning, allowing for various interpretations while still being identifiable to individuals from different social and structural backgrounds, centred around a shared core concept. The concept of Digital India is often present in various discussions surrounding public policy, political performance, and mainstream public debate. For policymakers, it represents a key initiative; for the political class, it symbolises a revitalised Indian nation emerging as a leader in the global digital economy; and for citizens, it may embody an inspiring vision of social mobility or a significant change in their interactions with the state (Panigrahi and Kumar, 2014).

According to Venkateswararao (2018), the Digital India program was launched with the aim of transforming India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy. Digital India emphasises the establishment of digital infrastructure as a fundamental utility accessible to all citizens. A key aspect of Digital India is the provision of governance and services as needed. The primary goal was to ensure that all government services are accessible to individuals in their local areas through common service delivery points, while maintaining efficiency, transparency, and reliability at affordable prices. Another key aspect of Digital India is the empowerment of citizens through digital means. This highlights the importance of universal digital literacy and the accessibility of digital resources or services in Indian languages. The Government of India has launched 115 initiatives under the Digital India program. Among the various initiatives, some Digital India programs specifically empower both rural and urban women. This paper presents key Digital India initiatives that empower women (Podile *et al.*, 2020).

Madhale (2018) noted that Digital India stems from various advancements and innovations. These transform individual lives in various ways and will engage the public more effectively. Digital India aims to transform the nation into a digitally empowered society and knowledge-driven economy. This project is providing effective governance to the community and collaborating with both State and Central Government. This paper aims to understand Digital India as an initiative where technology and connectivity converge to impact governance and improve citizens' quality of life (Azu, 2022).

Prakash and Madhulika (2018) note that over seventy percent of the country's population resides in rural areas. Many workers in this labour force struggle to engage with modern technology and techniques due to illiteracy and a lack of exposure to urbanisation. The Government of India has initiated an awareness program to promote cashless and paperless

transactions via digital payment systems. A significant segment of the labour force consists of women domestic workers, who remain distant from embracing new digital payment systems (Panigrahi and Kumar, 2014).

Sivapriya, Subhashini, and Preetha (2018) explore how Digital India impacts the economy by generating job opportunities, enhancing service delivery, and advancing technological sectors. It contributes to improved governance. The Digital India initiative has attracted considerable research interest across multiple disciplines due to its significant impact on the overall economy, especially within the technological sector (Banerjee and Banerjee, 2017).

Jaggi (2019) indicates that Digital India represents a shift towards accessible, paperless information available anytime and anywhere. The evolution from computing to communication, entertainment to education, and document printing to product manufacturing, culminating in the internet of things, has occurred rapidly over a relatively brief period. It facilitates mobile money transfers for individuals. Accessing small island states has transformed from an adventurous journey to a simple click of a mouse. The rise of digitalisation and the challenges posed by evolving technology in today's era. Digitalisation is clearly present across various business sectors. Education, entertainment, online business, and documentation (Yadav, 2020).

Pandey and Parmar (2019) anticipated This study investigates the factors that affect online shopping behaviour among consumers. Research indicates that various factors influence consumers' online shopping behaviour. These include demographic elements, social influences, the shopping experience, familiarity with the internet and computers, website design, social media, situational aspects, working conditions, product characteristics, promotional strategies, payment options, delivery services, and after-sales support (Nade, 2021).

Vijayan (2019) found that countries utilising technology for the benefit of their citizens experience significant changes across various sectors, resulting in GDP growth and increased national and per capita income. The government has a responsibility to enhance citizens' living standards by implementing programs that promote economic growth. Technology drove the digitalisation process, playing a vital role in the "Digital India Programme." India has become a country where the government has launched development programs aimed at stimulating economic growth and providing employment opportunities for the youth (Muralidharan, Paul and Basole, 2021).

Vijaya and Seethalakshmi (2019) highlight the significance of finance in the lives of Indian women. Women in India play a role in family administration. Finance encompasses the management of daily expenses and the decision-making process regarding family investments. The digitalisation of the economy will significantly affect the activities of Indian women. Overall, it is noted that women can adapt to the changes in the current environment. The increase in female literacy rates, which reached 65% in 2017-18, has positively influenced women's adaptation to digital technologies. Following agriculture, the tech sector ranks as the second largest in terms of female employment. This illustrates the significant role women have established in technology-related fields. The pandemic led to immediate effects on online retail due to various government restrictions (Muralidharan, Paul, and Basole, 2021).

Martin-Neuninger and Ruby (2020) and Hall et al. (2021) highlight that government factors, such as lockdowns and travel restrictions, significantly contributed to the increase in online shopping in New Zealand (Kannabiran and Narayan, 2005).

Hobbs (2020) noted that the initial stay-at-home and distancing orders in Canada resulted in increased online food retail. While early adopters utilised online grocery deliveries before the pandemic, many late adopters explored this option for the first time during the outbreak (Ünver and Alkan, 2021).

Jílková and Králová (2021) observed comparable trends across all generational groups in the Czech Republic. In summary, unforeseen government regulations led to a rapid rise in online shopping demand. Existing customers increased their use of online platforms, while new customers, including older and less tech-savvy individuals, began using these channels for the first time (Hwang et al., 2020; Pantano et al., 2020).

Reardon et al. (2021) presented case studies of food industry firms in Asia and Latin America that enhanced their e-commerce models or restructured their supply chains in response to initial lockdown measures. A survey of small Belgian retailers by Beckers et al. (2021) revealed that restrictions led to a doubling of online orders during the pandemic's first wave. In response to rising demand, 50% of retailers that previously did not utilise online channels established them in the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic (Narasimha, 2017).

Kirk and Rifkin (2020) predicted that online retail and contactless distribution methods would significantly increase during the pandemic to comply with social distancing regulations, as noted in their literature review. Nonetheless, findings regarding the enduring impacts of the pandemic on online retail remain largely speculative (Hobbs, 2020). Customers who

transitioned due to restrictions may continue to use online channels in the future. Some customers may revert to traditional channels at the earliest opportunity. The long-term potential for online retail to benefit from the pandemic remains a topic of discussion (Wang and Wu, 2025).

2.3 Literature Review on E-Commerce Business vs. Traditional Retail Business

Nelson (1974) identified two categories of products: search goods and experience goods. Before purchasing search goods, key product and service parameters are assessed. Experience goods are typically evaluated through direct use, as the costs of assessment exceed those of first-hand experience (Vijayan, 2019).

Mitchell (1999) argues that perceived risk significantly influences buyer behaviour, as consumers tend to avoid losses to maximise their purchases. It is crucial for managers to grasp the perceived risks faced by consumers. An individual's increased risk perception regarding an online channel correlates with a decreased likelihood of utilising it for purchase decisions (Cueto *et al.*, 2022).

Degeratu et al. (2000) demonstrate that, in certain categories, the brand name holds greater significance online compared to traditional shopping settings, though this may vary based on the attribute information provided. Online shopping prevails as consumers are unable to physically interact with products. This raises concerns about the colour, size, or quality of the product. The variation depends on the product category. Purchasing standardised items, such as computers and books, is perceived as less risky compared to buying experiential products like clothing and fashion accessories (Bhatnagar et al. 2000).

Low-quality merchandise fails to build consumer trust in online vendors. A consumer's distrust of online vendors is the primary reason for avoiding e-commerce transactions (Lee and Turban, 2001).

Online shopping poses risks of credit and debit card information misuse, leading to buyer concerns about potential financial loss. Many customers believe that their credit and debit card information is misused online, which significantly deters them from shopping on the Internet (Forsyther & Shi 2003).

Forsythe et al. (2003) discuss the risks associated with time loss in the purchasing of products and services. Consumers unfamiliar with the internet struggle to navigate shopping sites and find the products they need. Delays in downloading images and videos, along with confusing websites and lengthy transition processes, contribute to perceived convenience risks (Pal and Tripathi, 2022).

Lenvin et al. (2003) discovered that personal interaction with a product before buying significantly influences the preference for offline shopping, particularly for items like clothing. Textiles and clothing have gained significant traction in online retail, with no other sector experiencing the same level of impact from the internet as retail sales (Coward, 2014).

Levin, Levin, and Joshua (2005) found that factors like a vast selection and convenient shopping significantly influenced preferences for online shopping. Traditional shopping is favoured when the ability to personally examine products is crucial. Online shopping lacks the social interaction found in traditional shopping, where buyers and sellers engage face-to-face. Online retailers provide insights into products through buyer reviews, where customers share their experiences and opinions. Customer reviews are user-generated insights based on personal experiences, aiding potential buyers in identifying products that meet their specific needs and usage conditions. The older generation often feels uneasy about using the internet, leading them to prefer shopping at traditional stores (Kim & Park 2005).

Korgaonkar, Silverbalt, and Grad (2006) note that experience goods carry a higher perceived risk than search goods because online shopping lacks the direct tactile interaction with products. Understanding buyers' perceptions during online shopping is crucial. Consumers experience increased risk perception when shopping online. There is also a risk of inaccurate information on the website, which can result in incorrect purchases, or sometimes the information may be insufficient for customers to make informed decisions (Liu and Guo, 2008). Additionally, the website often lacks clarity regarding its return and exchange policies.

Issues such as incorrect and delayed deliveries are significant concerns for online shoppers in India (Saroja, 2010). In online settings, buyers often struggle to find seller addresses, which hampers their ability to address complaints related to product delivery. Shopper perceptions vary based on the types of products they need to buy (Chris Coward, 2014).

Chayapa (2011) notes that decision-making processes are quite similar for consumers, regardless of whether they shop offline or online; however, key differences arise in the shopping environment and marketing communication (African Union Commission, 2021).

Limbu et al. (2011) found that many online retailers offer minimal information about their companies and sellers, leading to consumer insecurity when making purchases from these sites. Other studies indicate that consumers often feel hesitant and anxious about sharing personal information with online vendors due to concerns about scams (Miyazaki and Fernandez, 2001; Limbu et al., 2011). Online consumers anticipate that websites will ensure secure payment processes and uphold their privacy.

Consumers tend to shy away from online shopping due to the perceived risks and a lack of confidence in its security (Cheung and Lee, 2003; George et al., 2015; Banerjee et al., 2010). Consumers view the internet as an unsafe platform for sharing personal information, such as emails, phone numbers, mailing addresses, and debit or credit card details, due to the risk of misuse by vendors or others (Lim and Yazdanifard, 2014; Kumar, 2016; Alam and Yasin, 2010; Nazir et al., 2012). Certain websites require shoppers to provide personal information before completing their purchases, leading to a significant number of abandoned shopping carts (Yazdanifard and Godwin, 2011). Approximately 75% of online shoppers abandon their carts prior to finalising their purchases or just before payment (Cho et al., 2006; Gong et al., 2013).

In 2011, Dong-Mo Koo and Ji-Hoon Lee explored the connections between dominance, energetic and tense arousal, and pleasure, examining how these factors influence intention. The survey of 406 consumers, comprising 217 offline store customers and 189 online users, revealed that dominance significantly influenced both energetic and tense arousal, but did not affect pleasure or intention in either shopping environment. Notably, the impact of dominance on tense arousal was not statistically significant in online shopping. Additionally, both forms of arousal positively and negatively affected pleasure (Siddiqui and Singh, 2018).

Yaobin Lu (2011) examined the factors affecting users' intentions to shift from offline to online channels providing similar services. The research found that new technology innovativeness and perceived benefits positively influenced users' intentions to adopt it. The study's findings suggest that internet experience influences how relative benefits affect consumers' intentions to shift from offline to online services (Charles, Xia, and Coutts, 2022).

Pauwels et al., (2011) discovered that the offline revenue effects of informational websites significantly vary based on product category and customer segment. Reduced online search costs particularly aided sensory products and customers located far from the store. Conversely, customers in a specific segment decrease their shopping trips, indicating that their online activities somewhat replace the experience of shopping in physical stores.

Traditional shopping allows for physical examination of products, direct communication with salespeople, and immediate possession of items. However, it requires travel and can be a more time-consuming process. Online shopping provides a convenient and time-saving approach, eliminating travel and carrying costs, as well as restrictions on shopping hours. However, it lacks the tactile experience of physical shopping. Pearson and Miller (2011) define online purchasing intention as the strength of a buyer's willingness to make specific purchases through online platforms (Vijayan, 2019).

Jonathan (2013) found factors like convenience, better prices, variety, fewer experiences, and careful shopping influence purchasers to shop online. Researchers have highlighted the risks associated with security, noting that it could lead to the loss of potential customers. Online shoppers need to be proficient with the internet and have reliable internet access (Siddiqui and Singh, 2018).

Yaqi Guo (2014) highlights the significant impact of technology on traditional business practices during periods of resource growth. Information exchange directly influences businesses. This is evident over time. This will lead to a transformation of the traditional business model. Customers can influence prices across various regions, enhancing their bargaining power. The demand and supply theory suggests that when consumers reduce costs, it encourages enterprises to enhance product development to sustain and boost profitability. The internet has transformed individuals' thought processes and lifestyles, becoming increasingly significant. E-commerce influences various aspects, yet it primarily transforms traditional business models (Raj and Aithal, 2018).

Isabel P. Enrique and Sergio Román (2014) explored how various cognitive and psychographic traits of consumers influence their perception of retailers' deceptive practices, comparing the effects of perceived deception in online versus in-store shopping (Crittenden and Crittenden, 2021).

Key factors such as detailed information, comfort, and convenience, along with reduced time investment and straightforward price comparison, drive consumers to prefer online shopping (Agift et al., 2014). Additionally, aspects such as product variety, fast service, and competitive pricing, along with reviews from past customers, contribute to a preference for online shopping compared to traditional retail (Jayasubramanian et al., 2015). Youth favour online shopping, especially during festivals and holidays when retailers provide significant offers and discounts, leading to a substantial increase in online traffic (Karthikeyan, 2016). Additionally, offerings

such as free shipping, cash on delivery, and flexible exchange and return policies are attracting customers to make online purchases.

During online purchases, customers lack the ability to see, touch, feel, smell, or try the products (Katawetawarakas and Wang, 2011; Al-Debei et al., 2015). This limitation makes it challenging for customers to evaluate products and complicates their purchasing decisions. Additionally, certain products, such as clothing and footwear, necessitate trying them on. However, online shopping prevents customers from physically examining and assessing the quality of these items prior to purchase, leading to hesitation (Katawetawarakas and Wang, 2011; Comegys et al., 2009).

In their study, Alam and Elaasi (2016) identified product quality as the primary concern for consumers when making online purchases. Additionally, certain customers have indicated the presence of counterfeit products and imitation items in their received orders (Jun and Jaafar, 2011).

In 2015, Aulakh noted that to harness the potential of India's "underdeveloped internet economy," Softbank, a prominent Japanese investment and technology firm, invested \$627 million in the online retail marketplace Snapdeal and \$210 million in Ola cabs. Mac (2014). New York-based Tiger Global Management has invested in companies such as MakeMyTrip, Decathlon, Flipkart, Myntra, and Quickr. Access to funding has created a supportive environment and growth potential for both large and small enterprises. It has allowed local startups to thrive amid intense competition with foreign companies and has integrated e-commerce into various aspects of daily life, making the distinction between e-commerce and traditional business increasingly unclear (Cochran *et al.*, 2021).

Irimia and Gottschling (2016) outline that developing an e-commerce solution primarily requires the establishment of a single e-commerce site, which can be achieved through four models: B2B, B2C, C2B, and C2C. B2B is said to be the fastest growing as the volume of transaction is much higher in this and all the orders and transactions are in bulk. It utilises electronic means for transactions, such as purchases and orders. These also involve business between two virtual companies and in these there is no physical existence of any of the side. B2C refers to transactions conducted online between businesses and their customers. This includes various emerging services, yet this model is not widely accepted, particularly in countries like India, due to security concerns and the risk of consumer information leaks. C2C refers to transactions conducted between customers via online platforms. This may include the

auctioning and sale of second-hand or used items. The website serves as a platform for advertisement. Examples include eBay and OLX. The website may charge a commission from both parties in certain instances. C2B resembles B2C as both involve transactions between consumers and business entities. In this scenario, the consumer acts as the seller while the business takes on the role of the buyer, with the consumer determining the price of the product instead of the producer. Additionally, certain models that incorporate government functions are referred to as e-governance. These include government-to-government (G2G), government-to-citizen (G2C), citizen-to-government (C2G), government-to-business (G2B), and business-to-government (B2G) interactions. Electronic commerce affects businesses in multiple ways and provides various advantages. Concerns about online theft and reliability contribute to the decision to avoid online shopping (Kalyani, 2019).

Shethar (2016), study reveals that wholesalers in the E-commerce landscape face significant risks, as producers can bypass them to sell directly to retailers and consumers. Wholesalers can leverage e-commerce to establish contracts with reputable producers and connect their businesses online (Poorhosseinzadeh *et al.*, 2023).

Shahjee (2017) discusses the benefits and challenges associated with the e-commerce industry. The business gains numerous advantages, such as access to a global marketplace for selling products, overcoming previous geographical limitations. This has resulted in lower operational costs, including processing, distribution, and storage. E-commerce enables customisation, transforming consumer purchasing by allowing products and services to be tailored to individual needs and preferences. This enables organisations to offer continuous services to their customers. Consumers benefit from round-the-clock access, enhanced product and service options, the ability to compare prices, and improved delivery services. It also has some benefits towards the society, as it helps people to connect with each other, enables more flexible working practices, etc. The article discusses several barriers to e-commerce, including inadequate technological infrastructure, online security concerns, a shortage of qualified personnel, and issues related to commercial infrastructure. The author concludes that most customers are from rural areas, lacking internet access, while some urban customers face limitations with credit facilities. Consequently, e-commerce is primarily confined to the urban class (Raj and Aithal, 2018).

Dahiya (2017) The article examines the impact of recent e-commerce developments on retailers and the market in India. The impacts on markets are significant, including reduced offline

advertising costs, enhanced online customer service, and rapid brand image development for corporations. It facilitates a two-way advertising process, allowing customers to compare prices and make informed choices. Additionally, it offers customisation options and streamlines the ordering process, saving both time and money. E-commerce affects retailers significantly. It has contributed to higher turnovers and profit margins by providing 24/7 access and offering discounts. Online stores provide a diverse range of products and superior customer service compared to their offline counterparts. E-commerce encourages window shopping in physical stores, as online retailers often offer lower prices on goods. The article demonstrates that in a price-sensitive country like India, e-commerce presents significant opportunities and has contributed to the growth of markets and retailers (Nade, 2021).

Sheth (2020) noted that the pandemic significantly impacted consumer behaviour. Confronted with limitations, consumers adapted by replacing old habits with new ones, such as transitioning to online retail, effectively bringing the store into their homes.

Researchers have explored how COVID-19 has significantly impacted online shopping, highlighting the essential role of online retail channels during the pandemic. Following the identification of COVID-19 in China, early research focused on how the crisis transformed the retail landscape, highlighting the growing significance of online channels (Gao et al., 2020; Guo et al., 2020; Hao et al., 2020; Li et al., 2020; Jiang and Stylos, 2021). The studies examined the impact of the pandemic on online shopping (Gao et al., 2020; Guo et al., 2020) and the role of online channels in helping people navigate the health crisis (Li et al., 2020; Hao et al., 2020).

Wadhawan and Arya (2020) highlight the significance of E-commerce. Examine the differences between traditional business practices and e-commerce. The research identified a key factor contributing to the growth of E-commerce in India. Factors contributing to this growth include mobile commerce, replacement facilities, various payment modes, logistics and shipping options, product quality, and customer service (African Union Commission, 2021).

Hao et al. (2020) examined an alternative dimension of customer behaviour. Their research indicates that panic buying—ordering more than what is immediately needed due to fear—is more prevalent in online food retail channels compared to traditional ones during disasters.

Guthrie et al. (2021) apply the react-cope-adapt model (Kirk and Rifkin, 2020) to show that in the first month of the pandemic in France, consumers engaged in panic buying, leading to a significant rise in online purchases of essential goods. The subsequent period involved managing the crisis, resulting in a rise in online orders for non-essential items. The adapt phase

aimed to demonstrate a lasting change in online purchasing behaviour. The authors concluded that further investigation is needed to understand long-term behaviour changes, given the limited data available (Zhang *et al.*, 2025).

Tran (2021) suggested that the fear of the pandemic influences consumers to shop online, as they seek to enhance their health safety and that of their community. Studies on the second wave of the pandemic (Chopdar *et al.*, 2022; Eger *et al.*, 2021) linked virus-related fears to a rise in online shopping. Mehroli *et al.* (2021) identify an exception, noting that a significant majority of Indian customers refrained from ordering food online during the pandemic's first wave due to fears associated with food delivery (Yin and Choi, 2022).

Chang and Meyerhoefer (2021) demonstrated that during the first wave in Taiwan, which lacked strict stay-at-home orders or business closures, consumers increasingly turned to online channels. During the initial weeks of the pandemic, the rise in confirmed cases led to an increase in both sales and customer numbers in online food commerce. Media influence played a significant role in altering customer behaviour, as evidenced by the positive correlation between COVID-19-related press articles, Google searches, and online food sales (Oláh *et al.*, 2018).

Jiang and Stylos (2021) suggested that the pressures individuals faced during lockdowns led consumers to establish a “new retail purchasing normality,” characterised by greater digital engagement and a rise in online purchases. A survey by McKinsey & Company across multiple countries revealed that the pandemic significantly altered consumer behaviour, with at least two-thirds of customers experimenting with new, primarily online shopping methods (Sneader and Singhal, 2021).

2.4 Literature Review on E-commerce Business Drawbacks

The characteristics of a product significantly impact consumers' intentions to make online purchases. Product characteristics may be either tangible or intangible, and they can be standardised or customised. In an online setting, the reduced tangibility of a product stems from the absence of physical interaction and support during the shopping experience. Consequently, consumers are less likely to engage in online shopping when they feel the need for guidance from a salesperson about the product in question (Monsuwe *et al.*, 2004). Products like cars, computers, and perfumes tend to have a lower likelihood of consumer purchase due to the need for greater personal knowledge and experience (Elliot *et al.*, 2000).

Lee and Turban (2001) suggest that a primary reason consumers avoid online shopping is their lack of trust in the process. The attitude towards security transactions encompassing payment security, consumer information privacy, return policies, and product shipping guarantees predicts online purchasing intentions for apparel products. Consumer trust in online shopping hinges on the perceived security and privacy measures in place (Lane, 2011).

Online shopping entails shipping fees for product delivery. Some consumers may hesitate to purchase a product due to additional delivery charges. Jiang and Rosenbloom (2005) suggest that e-tailers can leverage shipping and handling fees to attract customers by aligning with their delivery preferences. For instance, consumers who desire faster delivery may incur higher costs, while those willing to wait can opt for lower charges (Yoganandan, 2024).

Price represents a monetary value utilised in transactions. Research indicates that product prices vary between online and offline shopping environments. Xia and Monroe (2009) found that consumers tend to save money during price promotions on certain products. In online settings, consumers often rely on price indicators displayed on websites to assess product quality, as they lack the ability to physically examine the items (Jiang and Rosenbloom, 2005). So, Wong and Sculli (2005) found that promotional offers increase consumers' intention to purchase in online shopping. These offers facilitate purchasing decisions and simplify the evaluation of alternatives (Sharma, 2024).

Xia and Monroe (2009) found that consumers with a shopping goal respond more to promotional messages like “pay less” and “discount,” whereas those without a shopping goal are more attracted to messages such as “save more” and “free gift.” Xia and Monroe (2009, p. 691), referencing Monroe (2003), noted that price promotions offer several advantages, including boosting demand, managing supply and demand fluctuations, and enhancing consumer purchasing over time (Jaiswal, 2018).

Credit card fraud is a significant and increasing issue in the realm of online businesses. This may lead to lost profits, fines, and damage to reputation. Both customers and businesses are vulnerable to credit card fraud. Some pessimists argue that scams may ultimately lead to the decline of e-commerce (Chahar et al., 2013).

One of the prevalent challenges encountered during online shopping. In this shopping model, customers cannot test the item prior to purchase (Alhamdi et al., 2019; AL-Abrow et al., 2019). E-commerce removes an essential aspect of the purchasing process: the ability to test the product. While promotional videos for products may be expertly crafted and persuasive, many

customers remain reluctant to purchase items they have not personally tested or observed. This occurs because many customers lack confidence in the actual quality assurance of the product.

E-commerce lacks a crucial element that many customers deem essential: the personal touch. Some consumers require the personal experience of visiting a store and interacting with sales assistants. Online shopping limits opportunities for new relationships to develop (Searchcio, 2019; Al-Abbrow et al., 2019; Alnoor, 2019). Waiting is a characteristic of online shopping that can become problematic when customers lack patience. Shopping online often involves a wait of up to a week or longer before receiving your order. The satisfaction derived from traditional shopping is often postponed in online shopping, as customers do not physically possess the item immediately after purchase (Bhasin, 2019).

Cybersecurity is a global challenge that requires urgent attention. The absence of dependable security systems poses a significant risk for online shoppers. Recently, many respected organisations and global companies have become targets of scammers who steal consumer data from their databases. This may lead to legal and financial claims. It similarly undermines the trust that has taken years to establish between customers and their providers. Access to the internet is essential for customers to engage in online shopping. Devices that connect to the internet are also necessary (Bhasin, 2019).

If a consumer has questions about an item in a physical store, the assistant, cashier, or store manager is available to assist. Conversely, customer service on e-commerce platforms can be limited: services may be available only during specific hours, and consumers might experience long hold times when contacting support (Khurana, 2020; Alnoor et al., 2020).

2.5 Review of Literature on Digital Media Communication

Channels

Chaffey (2002) defines internet marketing as the use of digital technologies, such as the web, email, databases, and mobile/wireless platforms, to enhance marketing efforts. This approach aims to profitably acquire and retain customers throughout their buying journey and lifecycle by improving understanding of customer profiles, behaviours, and loyalty factors. It involves delivering integrated, targeted communications and online services tailored to individual needs. Chaffey's definition highlights the importance of the business model in electronic marketing, rather than allowing technology to dictate the approach. This aligns with the principles of relationship marketing (Singh and Kadam, 2024).

Mort et al. (2002) noted that traditional, repetitive advertising methods have been replaced by digital marketing in contemporary practice. Companies in Singapore have evaluated digital marketing tools and found them to be effective and beneficial for achieving desired outcomes (Shi *et al.*, 2024).

Chaston and Mangles (2003) explored how marketing style affects Internet use in small manufacturing firms in the UK. The study used a quantitative approach to assess how firms in business-to-business markets manage the Internet differently based on whether they adopt a relationship or transactional marketing orientation. The study utilised mailed questionnaires targeting a sample of 298 small UK firms, specifically manufacturers of mechanical or electronic components, engaged in business-to-business marketing, employing between 10 and 50 individuals, and not affiliated with British or multinational branch plants. There was not enough evidence to suggest that relationship-orientated firms perceive online markets differently than transaction-orientated competitors (Zhang *et al.*, 2024).

Teo (2005) highlights that the growth in digital marketing is primarily driven by rapid technological advancements and evolving market dynamics (Yin and Choi, 2022).

Mangold and Faulds (2009) noted that word-of-mouth contributes to attracting new members and boosting traffic to websites, pages, or online events, thereby enhancing visibility in marketing communication. Facebook, a leading platform for social communication, enables marketers to reach millions regarding products and services, creating new marketing opportunities. For success, businesses must establish effective communication strategies to engage customers and improve their experience with specific products or services (Babli, 2021).

Curran et al. (2011) argue that social media platforms like Facebook outperform other advertising methods by storing user information, which helps retailers effectively reach their target audience. Social media platforms offer retailers a valuable opportunity to enhance customer experience, leveraging data from these sites to refine their brand interactions (Shalhoub and Al Qasimi, 2006).

Shankar et al. (2011) found that retailers can enhance brand awareness through creative engagement with customers on social media platforms. “With an increasing number of shoppers turning to social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, and LinkedIn for their purchasing decisions, marketing through these channels has gained significance.” (Shah, 2018)

Hanna et al. (2011) emphasise that marketing professionals need a deep understanding of online social marketing campaigns and the ability to implement them effectively, utilising performance measurement indicators. The global market dynamics are evolving due to the accessibility and usage of social media among young audiences. Adopting strategic integration approaches in an organisation's marketing communication plan is essential.

Moreover, its potential to rejuvenate the economy presents significant opportunities for governments to operate more efficiently (Munshi, 2012).

Salehi et al. (2012) compare internet-based and traditional marketing, finding that digital marketing is a more cost-effective and quicker method for directly reaching buyers, making it an ideal approach for businesses to advertise both locally and internationally. Both types of marketing can assist traders and marketers in conducting business effectively. Each option presents its own set of benefits and drawbacks. Traditional marketing allows consumers to physically interact with products, but its reach is limited. In contrast, digital marketing transcends these boundaries, effectively introducing goods and services to a broader audience of internet users. Utilising the internet enhances marketing efficiency, speed, and convenience. The benefits of digital marketing significantly outweigh those of traditional marketing (Kansiime *et al.*, 2025).

Yazdanifard et al. (2013) highlight that digital marketing presents a compelling area of study for those in the marketing research community. This approach offers a novel method for marketing products and services to specific global audiences. This paper presents a novel approach to digital marketing in electronic commerce, highlighting the necessity of this innovation for advertisers' success. This also allows marketing managers to focus on more valuable tasks, such as developing marketing plans that enhance the company's growth.

Chaffey (2013) notes that while digital marketing is a relatively recent term, its influence is significant, complex, and often overwhelming. As a crucial component of the promotion mix, businesses seek clear strategies to initiate and adapt to digital marketing, yet they often struggle with understanding and implementation (Revinova, 2019).

Today, social media platforms like Facebook, Google Plus, and Twitter have significantly changed how targeted consumers think and feel. This digital marketing utilised an extensive network of customers, leveraging reliable data and real-time feedback on their experiences. Digital marketing involves leveraging modern technologies to enhance marketing efforts,

ultimately improving customer understanding by aligning with their needs and desires (Mwesha, Koome and Wachira, 2025).

Zhang et al. (2013) noted that blogs serve as an effective digital marketing tool, significantly boosting sales revenue, particularly for products that allow customers to read reviews and share personal experiences. Online reviews have proven effective for businesses as a component of their strategic marketing efforts (Anand and Murthy, 2024).

Stuart E. J. (2014) Online services are increasingly being adopted by consumers daily. Nevertheless, traditional marketers seem reluctant to acknowledge the changes in the world. They are hesitant to seize new opportunities that arise. B2B improves supply chain processes by focusing on real-world business practices, adapting automated systems to align with business behaviours, and integrating content and technologies with essential information systems (Koenig, Wigand and Beck, 2002).

Zenith Raval et al. (2014) introduced new dimensions in response to the rapidly changing needs of people worldwide. It has introduced new concepts with a contemporary perspective, presenting numerous opportunities and resources. India holds the third position globally in internet users, contributing to a rapid increase in the online shopping trend within the country. Online shopping presents significant opportunities for growth, particularly in India and globally. It reduces the time wasted on shopping trips, avoiding obstacles such as traffic, vehicle problems, and delays. An individual with limited weekend relaxation time may find online shopping to be the most convenient option, as it eliminates the need for planning trips to stores for easily accessible items, providing a sense of satisfaction. The rise of online shopping presents a significant opportunity for small and medium enterprises, allowing them to grow their businesses by partnering with major Indian online platforms to showcase their products and promote their services. Online shopping can be viewed as a journey through a new realm, where all your enquiries converge at a single point (Kumar, 2019).

Leeflang et al. noted the rapid growth of internet usage globally, highlighting digital as a vital source of competitive advantage in both B2C and B2B marketing. While much focus has been placed on the significant opportunities offered by digital marketing, the genuine challenges companies encounter in their digital transition have received insufficient attention. This study outlines challenges identified through a survey of 777 marketing executives worldwide. The findings indicate that addressing talent shortages, refining organisational structures, and

establishing measurable metrics present significant opportunities for enhancement in various industries (Sharma, 2025).

Yasmin et.al. (2015) noted that marketers encounter new challenges and opportunities in the digital age. Digital marketing involves the use of electronic media by marketers to promote products or services in the market. Digital marketing primarily aims to engage customers and facilitate their interaction with the brand via digital platforms. This article highlights the significance of digital marketing for marketers and consumers alike. This study investigates how digital marketing influences a firm's sales performance. This paper presents the distinctions between traditional and digital marketing. This study outlines different types of digital marketing, evaluates their effectiveness, and examines their impact on sales for firms. This study involves a sample of 150 firms and 50 executives, randomly selected to assess the effectiveness of digital marketing. The analysis of collected data utilised various statistical tools and techniques (Raj and Aithal, 2018).

Priyanka and Srinivasan (2015) explored the factors influencing product purchases through social media from the customer's perspective. A model has been created from the retailer's viewpoint to illustrate how social media can enhance customer loyalty. The research indicates that ongoing customer support services enhance customer retention. Emerging applications and social platforms will enhance personalisation and facilitate real-time, location-based interactions in media (Das, 2019).

Kaushik (2016) discusses the rapid growth of digital marketing in India. Numerous Indian firms leverage digital marketing to gain a competitive edge. The success of a marketing campaign cannot rely exclusively on digital marketing. For a marketing campaign to succeed, it must effectively utilise the diverse techniques available in both traditional and modern marketing. Start-ups that utilise digital marketing often experience failure. This study outlines necessary precautions for effectively implementing digital marketing to unlock significant sales potential (Singh, Jayashankar and Singh, 2001).

Das and Gouri (2016) discuss the transition of the world into a digital environment in their article. Today's businesses must have a website to effectively engage with their customers online. While traditional marketing strategies can be effective, especially for local audiences, embracing digital marketing is essential to remain competitive in today's landscape. Digital marketing, often referred to as Internet marketing, involves distinct processes. It is characterised by its targeted, measurable, and interactive nature. The content covers Internet

marketing methods, including search engine optimisation (SEO), search engine marketing (SEM), and link building. This includes non-Internet channels that offer digital media, such as SMS, MMS, call-back and on-hold mobile ringtones, e-books, optical discs, and games. Digital marketing is a contemporary tool for marketing in the 21st century. This paper explores various digital marketing techniques, including SEO, SEM, SMM, and PPC. This study examines the significance and risk factors linked to digital marketing. The resource provides valuable digital marketing strategies for businesses (Walters, 2001).

Yakup & Ibrahim (2016) examine the phases of digital marketing, highlighting its benefits and the transition from traditional to digital marketing. Recently, advancements in information technology and the expansion of broadband internet have significantly increased access speeds to shopping sites. As a result of these changes, companies inevitably transitioned into the digital environment (Sardar, 2014).

Consequently, as communication rules evolve, so do the field and definition of marketing. As IT technologies advance, traditional marketing methods are increasingly being replaced by digital approaches. Companies that embrace technology can effectively engage with customers in an interactive manner while delivering products or services. In both traditional and digital marketing, effective communication with customers and understanding their needs and requests are essential. Companies that engage in digital marketing benefit from two-way communication, while those that do not participate in this trend gradually fall behind their competitors. Digital marketing's primary benefit lies in effectively reaching the target audience through social media and search engines (Mukherjee, 2011).

P.K. Kannan and Hongshuang Alice Li (2016) proposed a framework for research in digital marketing that emphasises the key touchpoints in both the marketing process and strategy where digital technologies are currently influencing and will continue to influence significantly. Authors utilise the framework to categorise developments and existing research related to its elements and touch points, while also examining the literature within the broader digital marketing field. They discussed the emerging challenges and related enquiries for future research. They concluded by synthesising the identified questions and proposing a research agenda for future studies in digital marketing, focusing on firm perspectives (Zhang *et al.*, 2025).

Pineiro-Otero and Martínez Rolán (2016) aimed to explore effective digital marketing strategies in their research paper. This study identified various digital marketing strategies

beneficial for companies, nonprofits, educational institutions, and other professional sectors. The literature clearly indicates the integration of technology with various elements of traditional marketing ideology. The distinction between traditional and digital marketing lies in the strategic shift towards prioritising the customer over the product (Maity, 2023).

Arvind and Rao highlight the significant impact of digital marketing in contemporary society. While it is particularly popular among younger generations, middle-aged and older individuals are also influenced by its reach. Digital and social media are increasingly serving as indicators for assessing a campaign's popularity prior to its mass media launch. Retailers are adapting to consumers' digital advancements by employing strategies and programs through smartphones, tablets, and other digital platforms (Mukherjee, 2011).

Digital marketing encompasses various strategies, including push messaging, in-store digital signage, location-based promotions, and email communications, among others. This paper explores different facets of digital marketing and its connection with younger audiences. This research is crucial for determining the market size, growth, and potential of Big Bazaar. This study presents a future scenario for Big Bazaar from the current perspective (Koenig, Wigand and Beck, 2002).

Nazimsha and Rajeswari (2017) explore the importance of digital media marketing in the display age, emphasising the primary and secondary data collected. Advanced advertising refers to methods that allow organisations to continuously monitor campaign performance, including visibility, frequency, and insights related to sales conversion and associated strategies. Reviews clearly show that people prefer advertisements as a more effective method for promoting a product. Indian clients seek detailed information about a product, including quality, cost, and customer reviews, before making a purchase decision. Advancements significantly benefit Indian customers. Indian consumers often prefer online shopping. Individuals are drawn to online platforms for electronic products and clothing. Indian youth are increasingly accessing television programs through online platforms. The primary reason may seem unexciting; they can view programs they previously overlooked for various reasons. Similar trends are observed with daily newspapers, as individuals increasingly favour online news sources to avoid waiting for print editions (Kansiime *et al.*, 2025).

Sivasankaran (2017) notes that digital marketing presents several challenges for marketers in the retail sector. The current generation shows a greater interest in online shopping compared to traditional purchasing methods. Marketers must adopt innovative selling methods in

response to the purchasing behaviours of younger consumers. This study focusses on the core issue of digital marketing and its impact on the purchasing behaviour of youth, highlighting the significant influence of their buying patterns. The study shows that many young people today have access to digital media, yet they often lack awareness of how to use it effectively (Wang, Lyu and Zhou, 2025).

Kingsnorth (2017) emphasised the importance of integrating digital marketing with business strategy for mutual growth. Investigating specific digital marketing strategies would significantly enhance the existing knowledge in the field of digital marketing. Comprehensive qualitative and quantitative analysis can offer valuable insights into the effectiveness of particular strategies. Comparative studies of traditional and digital marketing can enhance understanding for both researchers and companies regarding the distinctions between these two approaches. Digital marketing represents a significant and impactful advancement in the marketing discipline (Praveen, 2023).

Istvanic et al. (2017) discusses the growing significance of product promotion in the digital age, largely driven by advancements in digital marketing. Traditional marketing is falling behind digital marketing, which provides users with new opportunities such as personalised messages and responses to search queries. This paper presents various methods and tools for internet advertising, highlighting their respective advantages and disadvantages. This discussion will focus on search engine optimisation, search engine marketing, display advertising, social networking marketing, and email marketing. The paper aims to enhance the efficiency of creating and implementing similar content in new business contexts by providing insights into internet advertising and social and business networks (Sharma and Tandon, 2020).

Duffett (2017) explores how interactive social media marketing communications impact the cognitive, affective, and behavioural attitudes of teenagers in South Africa. This study examines how various factors, including usage patterns (access, duration, frequency, and profile updates) and demographic variables (gender, age, and population group), influence young consumers' attitudes towards social media marketing communications. The research found that social media marketing communications positively impacted adolescents' attitude components, though the influence decreased in line with the purchase funnel model. This study significantly contributes to attitudinal research in developing countries, addressing the gap in social media marketing communications research. This study suggests that companies should adapt their strategies in response to the diminishing effectiveness of social media marketing on

young consumers' attitudes. It highlights the need to consider varying influences based on usage and demographic factors when targeting the dynamic and tech-savvy Generation Z (Malenya, 2017).

Keegan and Rowley (2017) enhance our understanding of social media marketing strategy by creating a stage model for SMM evaluation and identifying the challenges involved. A framework for evaluating social media marketing has been developed in this research paper. The framework consists of six stages: establishing evaluation objectives, determining key performance indicators (KPIs), selecting metrics, collecting and analysing data, generating reports, and making management decisions. The paper identifies and discusses challenges at each stage of the framework to enhance understanding of decision-making related to social media strategies. The study highlights two main challenges: the relationship between agencies and clients and the social analytics tools that are currently available (Tan and Ouyang, 2002).

Shirisha (2018) notes that digital marketing represents the quickest solution for e-commerce. This marketing strategy allows for quick buying and selling. Digital marketing enables rapid outreach to a broad audience or customer base. It plays a crucial role in the contemporary commerce system. This system enhances the speed and precision of our operations. Digital marketing offers a more cost-effective alternative to traditional offline marketing approaches. One significant advantage of digital marketing is the straightforward tracking and monitoring of results. Instead of investing in costly customer research, you can swiftly assess customer response rates and evaluate the effectiveness of your marketing campaign in real-time, allowing for more informed planning for future initiatives. This study emphasises the significance of digital marketing in today's landscape (Sinha, 2018).

Gibson (2018) discusses the increasing trend of organisations incorporating technology into their marketing strategies, highlighting the necessity for a thorough examination of digital marketing approaches. Shifting to client-centred marketing strategies allows businesses to embrace innovative practices that leverage digital marketing to fulfil their core marketing needs. This literature review examines effective digital marketing strategies that equip companies with essential tools to reach a broader audience by integrating emerging technologies with elements of traditional marketing. This study offers digital marketing strategies aimed at enhancing visibility for individuals, companies, organisations, and researchers within their target markets (Gulabdin *et al.*, 2022).

Sanjay Bhayani and Vachhan (2018) highlight the varying consumer opinions through the use of both traditional and internet marketing strategies. The internet is rapidly transforming consumer outreach, offering a more convenient alternative to traditional marketing methods. The internet provides round-the-clock access, making it increasingly convenient for consumers. Consumers are increasingly knowledgeable about Information Technology (IT) in both their search and purchasing behaviours. While e-commerce in India may still face safety concerns, the cyber market holds significant potential for growth and engagement (Bacasmas, Carlos and Katigbak, 2022).

This literature review outlines the evolution of e-commerce, highlighting the shift from early online platforms to the current prevalence of mobile commerce and omnichannel retailing. This study examines the impact of e-commerce on traditional retail, highlighting its role in enhancing consumer convenience, variety, and personalised experiences. Digital India Initiative This chapter highlights the importance of the Digital India initiative in promoting e-commerce growth. The review highlights essential elements of the program, including the National Digital Infrastructure, Digital Literacy Campaigns, and initiatives to promote online transactions, all of which have significantly contributed to the growth of e-commerce nationwide (Saravanan, 2019).

Research indicates that e-commerce has both beneficial and detrimental impacts on traditional retail businesses. E-commerce provides broader market access, lower operational expenses, and enhanced customer interaction. Conversely, it presents challenges including fierce competition, the necessity to adjust to evolving consumer behaviours, and possible job losses in traditional retail (Sukasame, Seborra and Mohedano-Suanes, 2008).

Numerous studies highlight the essential impact of technology and innovation on the success of e-commerce platforms. This review emphasises the importance of online payment systems, logistics, supply chain management, customer relationship management tools, and data analytics in fostering e-commerce growth and improving customer experiences. This chapter explores how government initiatives and policies influence the e-commerce environment. The text examines the actions of the Indian government, including regulatory frameworks, taxation policies, and guidelines for e-commerce marketplaces, aimed at balancing the promotion of e-commerce growth with the protection of traditional retailers' interests.

2.6 Review Related to Gig Economy

Malik et al. (2021) demonstrated how this study established the conceptual boundaries of both categories to explore the gig economy within the Web of Sciences database, contributing to the discourse on the platform economy and the gig sector. An initial search identified 378 papers on the "gig economy," with a cut-off date of February 2020. This investigation utilised science mapping techniques and associated software (SciMAT) to critically examine findings related to the gig economy. This research demonstrated a fourfold increase in value. The extensive literature on the gig economy has been outlined, highlighting emerging connections related to research opportunities and financial implications. Secondly, although research on the gig economy is widespread, the data indicated that the distinction between the "platform" and "gig" economies was often unclear in the analysis. This research elaborated on this topic. Thirdly, the gig economy topic appeared fragmented, indicating a need for a more focused research agenda to clarify discussions and enhance opportunities for explanation and exploration. This research provided recommendations for addressing this issue. The fourth step involved mapping the existing literature on the gig economy to highlight its limitations and outline a comprehensive study agenda in this area (Chawaria, 2024).

Tan et al. (2021) found that the gig sector is rapidly expanding, transforming labour dynamics and significantly reshaping modern economic structures. The growth encountered several challenges. This essay systematically examines the key ethical issues associated with the emerging gig economy. The text provides a concise overview of the gig economy's scale and impact, highlighting the key ethical concerns identified in the relevant literature. Three categories were utilised for mapping: the new job structure (what tasks were performed), the new labour composition (how tasks were executed), and the new role of employees (who executed them). The following step involved evaluating a new EU proposal aimed at addressing issues within the gig economy. The release of the European High-Level Experts Group's 2019 report on the impact of the digital revolution on EU labour markets marked a positive initial step forward. It emphasised the need for deeper consideration and government intervention to tackle ethical concerns related to algorithmic systems as control mechanisms, along with the bias, exclusion, and disengagement faced by gig workers (Zatonatska and Fedirko, 2019).

Kost et al. (2020) contended that supporters of the boundaryless profession perspective relied significantly on the assumption that individuals controlled their own professional development and, consequently, were responsible for shaping their career skills. This post examines the gig

economy, which appears to provide favourable conditions for boundaryless professions but is hindered by various challenges. It also explores potential strategies to promote these careers. Thus, the notion of limitless job opportunities within the gig economy may be contradictory. The study hypothesised that both intra-organizational and inter-organizational career barriers impede the development of essential professional competencies in gig workers, thereby limiting their mobility. The proposal suggested that to dismantle these boundaries, it was necessary to move away from traditional, employer-focused human resource management and adopt innovative, network-based, and self-organised approaches, such as cooperative communities of practice (Kumar, 2018).

Kaine and Josserand (2019) found that the gig economy has captured the attention of both the public and policymakers, evolving into a significant area of academic inquiry. This has led to discussions regarding the future of employment, labour law, and the impact of technological advancements on job quality. This special issue provides a timely introduction to the topic, situating the papers within a comprehensive literature review of the existing knowledge on the gig economy. These publications enhanced our understanding of the organisation of the technology-driven gig economy and the real experiences of workers across various national contexts. The study examined employment quality, collective forms, identity formation, and the impact of algorithmic control and administration. This study examined gig employees' conditions and the effects of gig work on technology and knowledge and identified potential areas for further research (Rehbein, 2013).

Schwellnus et al. (2019) examined how the rapid emergence of digital platforms for the gig economy ignited a policy debate focused on their financial and societal impacts. This study evaluated the new evidence. The results indicated that gig economy platforms constituted a modest portion of total employment, ranging from 1% to 3%. Their expansion has primarily occurred in a small fraction of service sectors dominated by own-account workers, indicating that, thus far, they have largely replaced traditional self-employment rather than dependent employment. This study's new data indicates that platform expansion positively affects total employment while having little to no impact on dependent employment and earnings. While most empirical studies indicate that networks effectively connect employees and clients, reducing barriers to employment could diminish these productivity benefits by expanding job opportunities for individuals with lower productivity. Modifying existing legislative frameworks in labour and product markets is essential for maximising the benefits of gig

economy platforms, ensuring that both consumers and employees are protected while treating conventional firms and platforms equally (Saurav, 2025).

Wood and colleagues (2019) examined the quality of work in the remote gig economy. The tasks involved providing various digital services remotely via online labour marketplaces. This research utilised semi-structured interviews across six nations (N = 107) and a cross-regional questionnaire (N = 679) to explore the impact of platform-based algorithmic control on remote gig work, focussing specifically on workers in Southeast Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. showed that algorithmic oversight is crucial for the operation of online labour platforms, regardless of differing national contexts and work types. Algorithmic management systems often provide workers with significant versatility, autonomy, task diversity, and complexity. These control systems can result in low income, social isolation, irregular working hours, excessive labour, sleep deprivation, and fatigue (Pandey, 2016).

Lepanjuuri et al. (2018) identified the 'gig' economy as a novel and relatively unexplored area of employment. Many individuals perceived the phrase as vague and not frequently employed. The recent digital revolution, marked by internet-based applications and digital platforms, has transformed short-term, flexible, and independent work into a virtual market for peer-to-peer trade, despite these concepts not being new to the economy. Despite some empirical studies, the overall scope of this field remains underexplored, leaving limited understanding of the characteristics of individuals in the gig economy. Consequently, NatCen was engaged to conduct a comprehensive quantitative analysis of the gig sector. This study defines the 'gig economy' as the exchange of labour for cash between individuals or businesses through online platforms that actively connect providers and customers, compensating them on a task-by-task basis (Chaudhuri and Kumar, 2015).

Lehdonvirta (2018) demonstrated that gig economy platforms offer workers significant temporal flexibility, allowing them full control over how they allocate their time throughout the day. What constraints do employees face when utilising this flexibility? The study analysed Mechanical Turk, Mobile Works, and Cloud Factory—three distinct online platforms for piecework by conducting 30 worker interviews and utilising additional data. Research indicates that worker control over scheduling is often limited by structural factors, such as job availability and dependency, as well as cultural influences like presenteeism and procrastination. There were significant variations in the severity of restrictions across platforms, with the platform that appeared most free exhibiting the most severe structural and

cultural-cognitive limitations. The study found that employees developed informal networks, tools, and techniques to navigate these restrictions. The study concluded that focusing on results rather than control is more advantageous for assessing flexible working arrangements (Falguieres *et al.*, 2015).

Burtch et al. (2018) examined the impact of gig economy platforms on local entrepreneurship. While offering permanent employment to the unemployed and underemployed, these platforms may inadvertently dissuade entrepreneurial efforts. Conversely, these platforms can foster entrepreneurship by providing employment flexibility, allowing entrepreneurs to strategically reallocate resources to support their emerging businesses. The introduction of Uber X and Postmates in the neighbourhood provided a natural experiment to alleviate this tension. Kickstarter, the world's largest reward-based crowdfunding platform, was utilised to examine the effects of various campaigns. The findings indicated that the launch of Uber X or Postmates significantly hindered the initiation of crowdfunding campaigns, adversely affecting local entrepreneurial efforts. The findings indicate that both unfunded and underfunded enterprises benefited significantly, suggesting that gig economy platforms effectively reduced less productive entrepreneurial efforts by offering sustainable employment opportunities for the unemployed and underemployed. The findings were backed by US Census self-employment statistics, which indicated similar losses following the introduction of Uber X, along with data from a survey of small-scale businesses in the gig economy (Alkan, Güney and Kılınç, 2023).

Healy et al. (2017) argued that the 'gig economy' emerged rapidly as a service delivery model that challenges traditional company structures, labour management practices, and legal frameworks. Despite increasing public interest in the interactions between platform firms and their workforces, there remains a lack of corresponding academic research on the topic. This study examined the current size and future projections of the gig economy to determine its relevance as a subject for employment relations research. The argument highlighted the need for research to better understand the power dynamics within the gig economy and how they challenge established institutions and norms. This study addressed two important areas where employment relations scholars can expand their theoretical frameworks, thereby enriching the understanding of gig-based employment. The creation of targeted questions aimed at enhancing understanding of "gig work relations" initiated a systematic study program. It is important not to assume that the gig economy will define the future of labour when conducting scholarly research on the topic. Various industrial, political, and economic factors may hinder or halt the growth of the gig economy (Sovbetov, 2018).

A summary of the literature review

The studied literature demonstrates that the incorporation of e-commerce into direct selling constitutes not just a digital transformation but a fundamental alteration in business strategy, employment frameworks, and consumer interaction. Researchers regularly acknowledge that digital tools spanning social media marketing to secure payment systems are crucial in augmenting sales effectiveness and improving customer acquisition and retention. Nonetheless, issues such as platform neutrality, unauthorised product listings, and pricing discrepancies arise as significant problems.

Consumer tastes are fast altering, exhibiting a significant movement towards ease, trust, and transparency in transactions. Research indicates that hybrid models, which integrate personal ties with technology interfaces, provide a competitive advantage. Trust cultivation, post-purchase support, and digital proficiency are identified as crucial in maintaining client loyalty in these dynamic marketplaces.

Moreover, the literature underscores the socio-economic aspects of digital direct marketing. The approach demonstrates its potential to empower women and youth, mitigate regional employment gaps, and promote financial inclusion, particularly when bolstered by systematic policies and entrepreneurship training. Global success narratives, shown by Amway's digital transformation, underscore the model's scalability and adaptability.

Similarly, scholarly research emphasises the necessity of a regulatory framework that guarantees ethical conduct, equitable competition, and data protection. India's recent policy advancements, notably the Consumer Protection (Direct Selling) Rules 2021, are regarded as favourable measures in this context.

The current literature establishes a robust basis for comprehending the opportunities and intricacies of e-commerce-driven direct selling. It delineates optimal practices, existing deficiencies, and prospective avenues to enhance this paradigm as a sustainable contributor to equitable economic growth in India.

CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

This chapter provides a brief overview of the data collection technique and the various tests performed to assess the validity and reliability of the gathered data (Calvão and Thara, 2019). This was conducted to enable the collected data to empirically test the hypotheses formed from the literature review. Research methodology is the systematic approach employed to conduct studies aimed at achieving accurate and comprehensive results in research. This chapter outlines the methods employed by the researcher to fulfil the study's objectives. The study offers detailed insights into the sample design, research framework, data sources, and analytical methods employed.

Research methodology systematically addresses research problems. This can be seen as the study of the scientific methods used in research. Research methodology encompasses not just the methods employed but also the rationale behind their selection within the study's context. It is essential to articulate why a specific method is chosen over others, ensuring that the research findings can be assessed by both the researcher and external evaluators (Bala and Verma, 2018).

“Clifford Woody outlines that research involves defining and redefining problems, formulating hypotheses or suggested solutions, collecting and organising data, evaluating findings, and ultimately testing to see if the results align with the initial hypotheses (Iddris, 2012).”

The research process

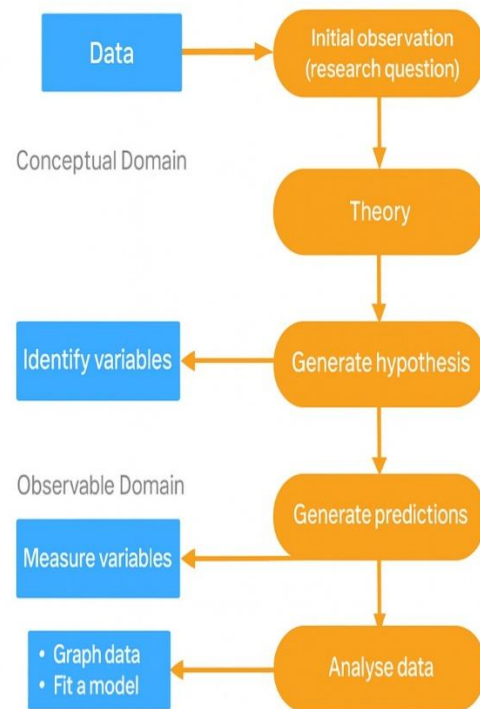


Figure 3.4: Design of the Research Process.

3.2 Importance of the Study

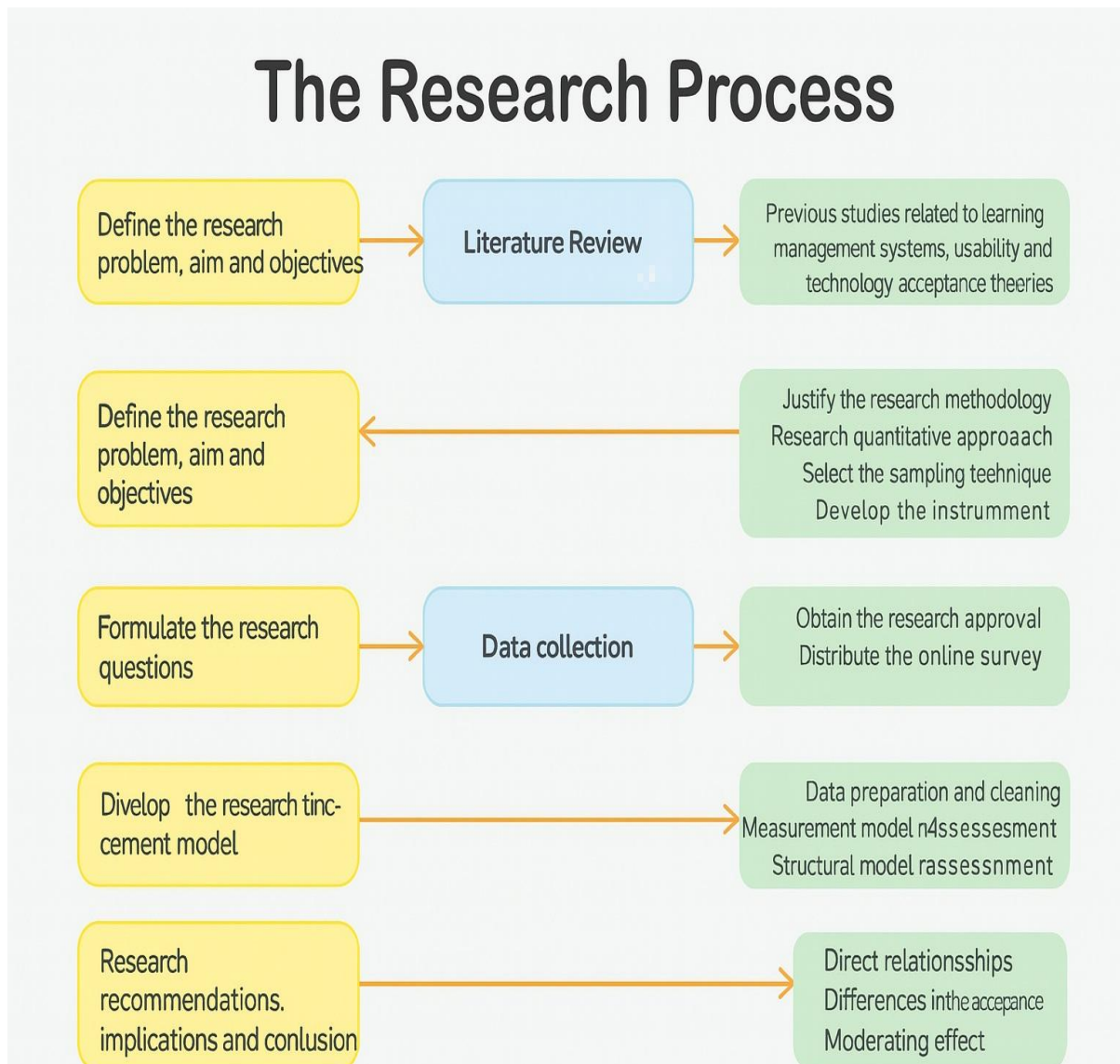


Figure 3.5: Flowchart depiction of the Research Process.

The rapid expansion of the gig workforce is driving a significant change in the global economy. India, with its large labour force of around 500 million and the youngest population globally, is at the forefront of this revolutionary movement, driven by rapid urbanisation and the widespread adoption of smartphones and technology. It is essential to examine the primary motivators of gig workers on digital labour platforms in India, especially those related to app-based hyperlocal discovery platforms. This study sheds light on the motivations, preferences, and goals of gig workers, providing insights that can help platforms develop effective rules and support systems tailored to their primary motivators. Recognising issues like job insecurity and income variability is crucial for delivering effective social support. This insight may assist

policymakers in developing legislation tailored to gig work. By understanding the motivations of gig workers, policymakers can ensure they receive fair pay, social security, and effective conflict resolution (Deshmukh, Sehgal and Kumar, 2022).

3.3 Conceptual Framework

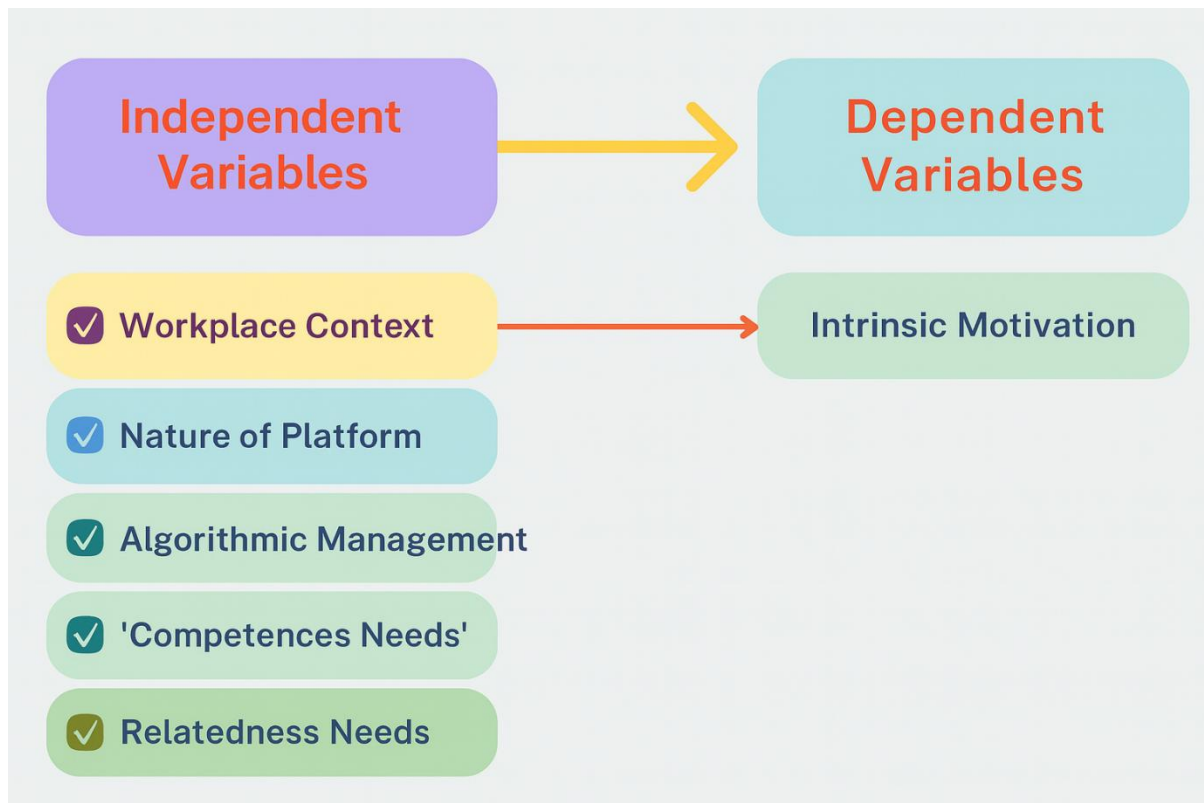


Figure 3.6: Dependent and Independent Variables.

Note: All the independent variables affect the dependent variable (intrinsic motivation).

3.4 Variables of the Study

a) Independent variables:

The independent parameter is modified in creative research to explore its effects, as it remains unaffected by other study variables known as the "independent variable." These expressions are commonly employed in statistical analysis to evaluate how changes in independent variables can predict or explain variance in dependent variables. An independent variable in research refers to the variable that researchers manipulate or adjust to examine its effects. It is termed "independent" as it remains unaffected by other study variables. The study identifies the independent variable as the workplace context, platform nature, algorithmic management, competence needs, relatedness needs, autonomy needs, and dignity (Maya, 2022).

- **Workplace context**

The workplace context encompasses the environment, culture, and conditions in which employees perform their tasks. It includes multiple factors and elements that influence the work experience and interactions among individuals within a specific organisation or workplace environment.

- **Nature of the platform**

The platform's nature encompasses its essential characteristics, structure, and defining attributes within a digital ecosystem. Platforms are digital environments that enable interactions and exchanges among various participants, including users, producers, and consumers.

- **Algorithmic management**

Algorithmic management refers to a set of technical tools and methods employed to oversee teams of employees remotely. This approach relies on data collection and monitoring to enhance automatic or semi-automated decision-making processes.

- **Competence needs**

Competence needs, or skill requirements, denote the specific knowledge, abilities, and expertise individuals must possess to effectively fulfil their roles within a given context or organisation. The required competencies align with job demands, organisational goals, and industry standards.

- **Relatedness needs**

Relatedness needs encompass the desire for social belonging, emotional support, and a connection with others. The need for understanding, care, and acceptance within social groups, including family, friends, colleagues, or communities, is fundamental to human experience. Meeting relatedness needs enhances an individual's psychological well-being, self-esteem, and mental health.

- **Autonomy needs**

Autonomy is the fundamental requirement for self-direction and a sense of self-determination. Autonomy needs reflect the fundamental psychological desire for independence, self-determination, and control over one's actions and decisions. This is a key element of human motivation and well-being.

- **Dignity**

Dignity signifies the fundamental and intrinsic worth of everyone. It refers to the inherent quality of deserving respect, honour, and esteem solely based on one's humanity. Dignity

acknowledges the intrinsic value of every person, emphasising the need for fair, compassionate, and considerate treatment, irrespective of their background, social status, or situation.

- **Dependent variables**

The dependent variable is evaluated during the process and varies because of it. The dependent variable responds to the independent factor. It is considered dependent when it relies on the independent variable. A dependent variable responds to changes in an independent variable. In statistics, dependent variables are commonly known as response variables. The study focuses on "intrinsic motivation" as the dependent variable.

- **Intrinsic motivation**

Engaging in an activity for its inherent value, rather than for external rewards, exemplifies intrinsic motivation. A person is considered "intrinsically motivated" when their actions are driven by the enjoyment or satisfaction of the activity itself, rather than external pressures or rewards.

3.5 Objectives of the Study

1. How does the integration of e-commerce platforms influence the sales performance, customer acquisition, and retention strategies of direct selling companies in India?
2. What are the primary challenges and limitations that direct selling companies face when incorporating e-commerce technologies into their traditional business models?
3. How do consumer behaviours and preferences differ between traditional direct selling approaches and those enhanced by e-commerce platforms in the Indian market?
4. What key factors and best practices can be identified to develop a robust framework for optimizing direct selling operations through e-commerce integration?
5. To what extent can the combination of e-commerce and direct selling serve as a viable alternative to conventional employment, particularly in promoting youth entrepreneurship over traditional government job pathways?
6. How effective are e-commerce and direct selling initiatives in addressing the issues of unemployment and underemployment in India?
7. In what ways do e-commerce and direct selling contribute to reducing wealth disparities and promoting a more equitable distribution of income in the country?
8. What strategies can be implemented to increase women's participation in the e-commerce and direct selling sectors, and how does this participation impact India's GDP and economic development?

9. How does the smart micro e-franchisee model offer freedom in terms of work, place, and time, and what implications does this have for marginalised groups irrespective of gender, caste, religion, or location?
10. What global expansion opportunities can Indian direct selling companies leverage through the effective integration of e-commerce, and what strategies are critical for successful international market penetration?

3.6 The Hypothesis of the Study

A research hypothesis is a statement that expresses the researcher's prediction regarding the relationship between two or more variables being studied in response to the research questions. This proposal is based on established theories and insights in the relevant research field. The researcher developed a hypothesis through discussions with experts, careful observations, and a comprehensive literature review.

H01: Integrating e-commerce platforms improves the sales performance, customer acquisition, and retention capacities of direct selling enterprises in India.

H02: Direct selling companies in India face significant operational, technological, and infrastructural challenges when transitioning from traditional models to E-commerce-integrated systems.

H03: E-commerce and direct selling models provide a viable and attractive employment alternative for Indian youth, promoting entrepreneurship over dependence on conventional government jobs.

H04: Integration of e-commerce with direct selling significantly contributes to reducing unemployment and underemployment among India's educated youth.

H05: E-commerce and direct selling play a positive role in narrowing income disparities by offering inclusive earning opportunities across various socio-economic strata.

H06: Increased women's participation in e-commerce and direct selling significantly contributes to GDP growth and improves socio-economic indicators in India.

H07: The smart micro e-franchisee model fosters flexible, inclusive work arrangements that empower marginalized groups irrespective of gender, caste, religion, or geography

These hypotheses aim to determine whether e-commerce offers tangible benefits to direct selling companies and whether its adoption is essential for sustaining competitiveness in a

digitally driven market. The study will test these hypotheses through quantitative and qualitative methods, assessing sales data, customer feedback, and representative performance metrics to draw valid conclusions.

3.7 Research Methodology

The study employs a descriptive analysis using both qualitative and quantitative approaches, along with an inductive method. This research focusses on the selected cities of Uttar Pradesh: Lucknow, Prayagraj, Varanasi, Kanpur, Noida, Agra, and Meerut. This study aims to gather empirical evidence using both primary and secondary data. Secondary data was gathered from reports, research papers, textbooks, and both national and international articles and journals. This study incorporates primary data collected through a structured questionnaire. A sample of 300 gig workers utilising hyperlocal discovery platforms was employed. Applications such as AMOS, SPSS, and Excel have been employed. Responses from participants will be categorised and assessed based on their similarities and differences, presented through percentages, charts, and graphs (Oláh *et al.*, 2018).

3.8 Study Area

The research gathered data from 300 participants through structured questionnaires in key cities of Uttar Pradesh, India, including Lucknow, Prayagraj, Varanasi, Kanpur, Noida, Agra, and Meerut. Uttar Pradesh serves as the study area due to its status as the most populous state in India.

3.9 Targeted Population

This study focuses on gig workers utilising hyperlocal discovery platforms for income generation.

3.10 Sample of the Study



Figure 3.7: Pictographical representation of the sampling process.

A sample size of 300 gig workers working through hyperlocal discovery platforms has been used from the major and growing cities (Lucknow, Prayagraj, Varanasi, Kanpur, Noida, Agra, and Meerut) of Uttar Pradesh, India for the study.

3.11 Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling, or "judgement sampling," is a non-probability method in research where participants are chosen based on the researcher's expertise and judgement. The researcher employs purposive sampling to choose individuals, cases, or elements from the target population that are deemed most relevant to the research objectives. Cluster-based sampling has been employed to categorise respondents into distinct groups.

3.12 Collection of Data

Data collection involves gathering and measuring information to address research questions, confirm hypotheses, and assess results. This study utilised both primary and secondary data to achieve its research objectives.

1. Primary Data

This pertains to information that is newly collected by a researcher, representing a first-time gathering of data.

Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire is a widely used instrument in social science and market research, designed to gather data on the views, opinions, and experiences of the targeted population. The document contains a set of structured questions designed to collect data. This method of data collection is effective for gathering many responses. When creating a new questionnaire, using the Content Validity Index (CVI) tools is recommended to assess its content validity. Reynolds, Diamantopoulos, and Schlegelmilch (1993) suggest that pre-testing or pilot testing is essential for finalising the questionnaire. After completing this step, the researcher can move forward with administering the questionnaire to respondents for the study (Zolotina, Kosareva and Chernykh, 2023).

A well-designed questionnaire is crucial for gathering the necessary information for the study. The questionnaire must feature clear questions, use simple language, and maintain brevity. A well-crafted questionnaire encourages respondents to provide accurate, impartial, and thorough

information. Reynolds, Diamantopoulos, and Schlegelmilch (1993) argue that a well-designed questionnaire encourages respondents to provide accurate, unbiased, and detailed information.

The questionnaire can be shared through different channels, including traditional mail, public venues, or group settings like social events or educational institutions.

Data was gathered from 300 gig workers utilising hyperlocal discovery platforms in key cities of Uttar Pradesh, India, including Lucknow, Prayagraj, Varanasi, Kanpur, Noida, Agra, and Meerut, using a structured questionnaire (Kannan, Kumar and Lakshmi, 2020).

The questionnaire for the study includes the following:

- a. Closed-ended questions and
- b. Five-point Likert Scale Questions.

2. Secondary Data

In essence, secondary data refers to information collected for a purpose other than the one for which it is currently being used. Secondary data sources comprised reports, research papers, textbooks, and both national and international articles and journals.

3.13 Statistical Tools

Statistics are used in science to demonstrate validity and reliability. Among two study publications, one featuring statistics and the other lacking them, the latter tends to be more engaging. Descriptive statistics often convey significant insights concisely. Researchers often struggle to accurately interpret data.

1. SPSS

SPSS, or "Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences," is recognised as the industry standard for statistical analysis software. SPSS can be utilised for various purposes related to data processing and storage. The method is initially termed "interactive batching," while the latter is known as "noninteractive batches." These procedures exemplify batch processing.

2. AMOS

AMOS refers to the "Analysis of Moment Structures." AMOS provides effective and accessible software for structural equation modelling (SEM). The AMOS statistical program is utilised to analyse moment structures. "AMOS" is an SPSS add-on module designed for structural equation modelling, path analysis, and confirmatory factor analysis.

3. Excel

Excel is a highly advanced yet user-friendly statistical program. Data can be stored in a tabular format, organised into rows and columns. The most notable feature of Excel is its pivot tables. Altering data can yield fresh insights, and pivot tables serve as a valuable tool for this purpose. The study utilised SPSS, AMOS, and Excel to analyse the collected data and draw conclusions, enabling the researcher to advance the investigation and achieve its objectives more efficiently.

3.14 Statistical Technique

The gathered data has been input into a computer for categorisation, coding, and tallying. The study employed suitable statistical techniques, including multivariate analysis.

Descriptive Analysis

LeCompte and Schensul describe the process of evaluating and refining data to produce new insights as research data analysis. Data analysis is made easier by breaking down large datasets into smaller, manageable parts. The analysis is divided into two main categories: inferential and descriptive analysis.

Descriptive statistics are used to clarify the features and attributes of the data. This method clarifies the essential features of different research data types and presents the information in a clear way, making it easier to identify patterns within the data. The article “Data Analysis in Research: Why Data, Types of Data, Data Analysis in Qualitative and Quantitative Research” (Question Pro, 2019) examines the importance of data analysis in research, the different types of data, and how data analysis is applied in both quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

Measure of Frequency

The measure of distribution refers to the total count of occurrences for each data point.

Measure of Central Tendency

Measures of central tendency help define the central position within a data set's distribution. To determine the frequency of each data point in a distribution, one can analyse its occurrence and describe it using statistical measures like the mean, median, or mode. The measures reflect the dominant trends in the data set under examination.

Measure of Dispersion

Spread measures, known as measures of variability or dispersion, are statistical tools used to determine how a dataset is distributed.

Factor Analysis

Factor analysis is a common method in data analysis that seeks to reduce many variables into a simpler and more manageable set of components. This approach generates a unified score by employing the variable that exhibits the greatest shared variance across all variables. This score can serve as a comprehensive index for all variables in further analysis. Gorsuch (2013) states that the main goal of factor analysis is to provide a clear and accurate summary of the relationships between variables to support understanding. The correlation coefficient is used to categorise various variables into fewer factors. A detailed analysis is conducted to identify the fundamental structures present in the data. As a result, factor analysis has become the leading method for identifying underlying constructs and integrating various variables (Hair et al., 2009).

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) is a statistical method used in social sciences to identify underlying factors that explain observed data. Orcan (2018) identifies EFA as a key method for scale development. To evaluate the validity of the structure obtained from exploratory factor analysis (EFA), it is essential to perform scale development experiments using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), as recommended by Worthington and Whittaker (2006). The research employed Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to create a scale within the defined area. We performed Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) utilising SPSS Version 25.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) represents a specific type of factor analysis. An initial exploratory factor analysis (EFA) is essential to uncover the underlying factor structure of the dataset. The factor structure identified in exploratory factor analysis (EFA) is confirmed through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) (Cavite, 2020). This study employs IBM SPSS AMOS 24 software to perform Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). Conducting Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) consists of three key steps:

Initial CFA

The pattern matrix builder is used in the initial confirmatory factor analysis to develop the model. Chi-square Statistics for Invariance Testing The goodness of fit indicators are assessed using measures such as CFI, GFI, IFI, NFI, and AGFI. Fit quality is assessed using indicators such as RMSEA and RMR.

The invariance test evaluates whether measures are equivalent across various groups, using Model Test Statistics for this assessment. The Model Fit indices include three key components.

Model Validity Test

The model validity test is conducted to assess the instrument's precision and reliability. This is achieved by examining construct, discriminant, and convergent validity, as detailed in the following sections.

Construct Reliability

We evaluated construct reliability using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability measures. Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) state that if Cronbach's alpha and Composite reliability, as outlined by Hair et al. (2010), are both above 0.70 for each construct, the model demonstrates satisfactory construct reliability.

Convergent Validity

To estimate convergent validity for scale items, researchers use Average Variance Extracted and standardised regression weights, following the approach suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981). Convergent validity in a model is established when the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and factor loading both surpass the 0.50 threshold.

Discriminant Validity

The study assessed discriminant validity using the Fornell and Larcker Criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) Ratio. The Fornell and Larcker criteria indicate that discriminant validity is achieved when the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) for a construct exceeds its correlations with other constructs, suggesting no validity concerns. Furthermore, the “heterotrait-monotrait” (HTMT) analysis is anticipated to produce no warning indicators. When the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) surpasses the inter-construct correlations, and there are no validity issues indicated by the HTMT ratio, it indicates that the model has attained discriminant validity.

Multivariate statistics- CB SEM

In CB-SEM, multivariate statistics involve analysing several dependent variables at the same time. This method analyses relationships among multiple variables, taking their interdependencies into account. CB-SEM, or Composite-Based Structural Equation Modelling, is a multivariate statistical method that combines elements of composite modelling with

structural equation modelling. In CB-SEM, observed indicators that reflect a latent construct are combined to create composite scores. The composite scores represent the observed variables in the structural equation model, illustrating the relationships among the latent components. CB-SEM allows researchers to analyse various components and their connections at the same time, offering a comprehensive perspective on complex systems and enhancing our understanding of their fundamental relationships. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) is often utilised in Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) for reflective constructs. Reflective constructs are understood as those where the indicators measured are shaped by an underlying latent variable, which embodies an abstract concept or construct. The latent variable accounts for the correlation among the observed indicators. This research utilises reflective constructs, which are quantifiable and believed to be affected by a hidden latent variable (Cueto *et al.*, 2022).

Regression

Regression is a statistical technique used to examine the relationship between a dependent variable and an independent variable. Regression analysis primarily identifies and quantifies the relationships between variables to facilitate predictions or estimates. In regression analysis, independent variables are used to explain or predict changes in the dependent variable, which is the outcome being analysed. The generic form of a linear regression equation with a single independent variable is as follows:

$$Y=a+bX+u$$

where:

y = “Dependent variable”

x = “Independent variable”

β_0 and β_1 = “Regression coefficients, representing the intercept and slope of the regression line, respectively”

ε = “Error term, which accounts for the random variation or unexplained part of the dependent variable”

Reliability

Reliability refers to the degree to which a measurement or test produces consistent results over time, across different contexts, or among various researchers or observers. This pertains to the accuracy, reliability, and consistency of the measurements or data gathered in a study. High

dependability indicates that measurements are devoid of random errors, ensuring reliable and consistent results. Reliability is essential for data quality in research, as it underpins the validity and reproducibility of results and conclusions drawn from the data. In fields such as psychology, education, and social sciences, it is essential for researchers to derive accurate conclusions from their measurements and data.

$$R(t) = 1 - F(t)$$

Validity

In scientific research, validity refers to how accurately a measurement or test produces reliable results. Validity examines how well the results of a measurement or data collection method reflect the true concept or construct being studied. An effective measurement should produce precise and significant results that align with the study's objectives or the theory under evaluation. Validation is crucial for confirming that the findings derived from data are robust and trustworthy. An invalid measurement can distort results, resulting in misleading conclusions about the underlying phenomenon.

$$CVR = (Ne - N/2) / (N/2)$$

The validity of the instrument is ensured through these three approaches:

Face Validity

Face validity examines whether a test's content seems appropriate for achieving its intended goals. Middleton (2019) notes that experts assess face validity in the initial phase by reviewing the questionnaire and suggesting modifications as needed.

Content Validity

Content validity examines if the test accurately reflects the construct it aims to measure. Evaluating content validity in a test aims to ensure it fully represents all aspects of the construct (Middleton, 2019). Yusoff (2019) outlines two methods for assessing content validity: (a) a thorough review of existing literature and (b) consulting expert opinions.

Construct Validity

Construct validity is a method used in social sciences, psychology, and education to assess the reliability and validity of a test. Stephanie (2014) indicates that the evidence supports the test's effectiveness in assessing the intended construct. Construct validity is ensured by meeting three

key components: composite reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Composite reliability, or construct reliability, measures the internal consistency of scale components, similar to Cronbach's alpha (Stephanie, 2019). Convergent validity refers to how well a new scale correlates with other measures that evaluate the same underlying concept. The concept should be associated with independent, varied factors alongside those that are similar and related (Bhalekar, 2020). Discriminant validity indicates that a specific test shows no significant correlations with other tests assessing different constructs (Nikolof *et al.*, 2025).

Chapter IV: Data Analysis & Interpretations

4.1 Introductions

Data analysis involves gathering, refining, and structuring data to extract the necessary insights. This process involves systematically gathering, presenting, summarizing, and analyzing data through logical and statistical methods to derive meaningful conclusions. This chapter presents a statistical analysis of the data and findings to support the proposed research model. This chapter explores data processing and interpretation by showcasing the results of experiments conducted through the statistical methods outlined in Chapter 3. This chapter presents the AMOS data as suggested by earlier studies. “This study may explore the execution of the measurement and structural model through CB-SEM analysis.” The measurement model assesses the validity and reliability of the construct. The structural model assesses the significance of theorized connections through analysis (Kannabiran and Narayan, 2005).

This chapter's experiments, grounded in a theoretical framework, contribute to achieving the research objectives. The chapter begins by describing the respondents, followed by a detailed discussion and evaluation of the measuring model. Researchers examine the discriminant validity, average variance extracted, convergent validity, and reliability of each indicator. The evaluation of the framework is presented in the following section of this chapter. After a comprehensive review of various methods used to analyse the structural model, the research hypotheses are tested. This chapter aimed to analyze the structural model and assess the validity and reliability of the measurement model (Shalhoub and Al Qasimi, 2006).

Validation of the structural model occurs after assessing the validity and reliability of the measurement model. This thesis examines how Workplace Context, Nature of Platform, and Algorithmic Management relate to the Intrinsic Motivation of gig workers, highlighting the roles of Autonomy, Competence, Relatedness, and dignity in this motivation. This chapter presents preliminary study findings, concluding with a summary.

4.2 Data Cleaning

Cleaning data involves identifying, diagnosing, and updating it to eliminate mistakes or mitigate their effects (Broeck et al., 2005). Table 4.3 outlines the data cleaning procedures and data collection challenges suggested by Broeck et al. (2005).

Table 4.3: Causes of errors in data collections causing the rejections.

Data Stage	Source of Problem: “Lack of Excess Data”	Source of Problem: “Outliers and Inconsistencies”
Questionnaire	Form Missing	Correct Values filled out in the wrong box
	Form Double. Submitted Repeatedly.	Not readable
	Answers Left Blank	Writing error
	More than one option filled	Answer given is out of Expected Range
	Lake or excess of data carried over from the questionnaire	Outliers and inconsistencies carried over from the questionnaire
Database	Form or Field not entered	Value incorrectly entered
	Data erroneously entered twice	Value incorrectly changed during previous data cleaning
	Value entered in the field	Transformation (programming error)
	Inadvertent deletion and duplication during the data mining	
	Lake or excess of data carried over from database	Outliers and inconsistencies carried over from database
Analysis Dataset	Data extraction transfer error	Data extraction transfer error
	Detections duplications by the analyst	Sorting errors
	Sorting errors	Data- cleaning errors

Gig workers from key cities in Uttar Pradesh, India, including Lucknow, Prayagraj, Varanasi, Kanpur, Noida, Agra, and Meerut, were prioritised for the sample selection. We distributed 400 questionnaires and received 315 responses. Subsequently, data cleaning was performed to address any inconsistencies in the dataset. At each stage following data collection, we conducted screening to detect missing values, incorrect records, and outliers in the responses (Jacobs and Slaus, 2011). Due to inaccuracies and absent information, 07 responses were removed. Additionally, 05 respondents provided identical answers across the questionnaire, and 03 responses were eliminated because they were outliers. Consequently, 15 responses were identified as inappropriate and removed from the study. A total of 300 valid responses were obtained for analysis, resulting in a response rate of 78.75 percent.

4.3 Descriptive Analysis of Data

The data is analysed descriptively to uncover the demographic traits of the respondents. The research gathered data from 300 participants through structured questionnaires in key cities of Uttar Pradesh, including Lucknow, Prayagraj, Varanasi, Kanpur, Noida, Agra, and Meerut. Table 4.4 presents the final sample size of 300 respondents, following the exclusion of those who either did not complete the survey or did not pass an attention check item (Sukasame, Sebora and Mohedano-Suanes, 2008).

Table 4.4: Demographic Profile.

S. NO.	Demographic Characteristic	Category	N	%
1.	Gender	Male	275	91.7
		Female	25	8.3
2.	Age	18-24 Years	103	34.3
		25-30 Years	112	37.3
		31-35 Years	55	18.3
		36-45 Years	30	10.0
		Intermediate	24	8.0
3.	Educational Qualifications	Graduate	135	45.0
		Postgraduate	108	36.0
		Diploma	13	4.3
		Others	20	6.7
4.	Experience	1-3 years	130	43.3
		3-5 Years	170	56.7
		Zomato	104	34.7
		Urban Company	46	15.3
5.	Working Platform	Ola	102	34.0
		Rapido	27	9.0
		Swiggy	21	7.0

The selected sample accurately reflects the broader population. The analysis reveals the demographic profile of the respondents. Table 4.4 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents, including gender, age, educational qualifications, experience, and the platforms on which they work. Table 4.4 shows that among 300 respondents, 91.7% are male and 8.3% are female, primarily from the major cities of Uttar Pradesh, including Lucknow, Prayagraj, Varanasi, Kanpur, Noida, Agra, and Meerut. The respondents' ages range from 18 to 45 years, with the majority, 37.3%, falling within the 25–30-year bracket (Jacobs and Slaus, 2011). The respondents' education level is categorised into five groups: Intermediate, Graduate, Postgraduate, Diploma, and Others, with the majority being Graduates at 45.0%. Among the respondents, 43.3% have 1-3 years of experience, while 56.7% possess 3-5 years of experience. They are employed across various platforms, including Zomato, Urban Company, Ola, Rapido, and Swiggy, with the majority (34.7%) working on the Zomato platform.

4.4 Data Analysis and Interpretation

We employed Composite-Based Structural Equation Modelling (CB-SEM) to test the hypotheses. Multivariate statistics involve analyzing multiple dependent variables at the same time within the framework of CB-SEM. This tool analyses correlations among various variables, considering their interdependence. CB-SEM, or Composite-Based Structural Equation Modelling, is a statistical approach that integrates composite modelling with structural equation modelling (Singh, 2011). In CB-SEM, observed indicators that represent a latent construct are combined to produce composite scores. The composite scores represent the observed variables in the structural equation model, highlighting the relationships among the latent components. CB-SEM enables researchers to simultaneously assess various components and their interconnections, providing a holistic view of complex systems and enhancing understanding of their fundamental relationships. In research involving reflective constructs, researchers often use Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) as part of Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) (Mukherjee, 2011).

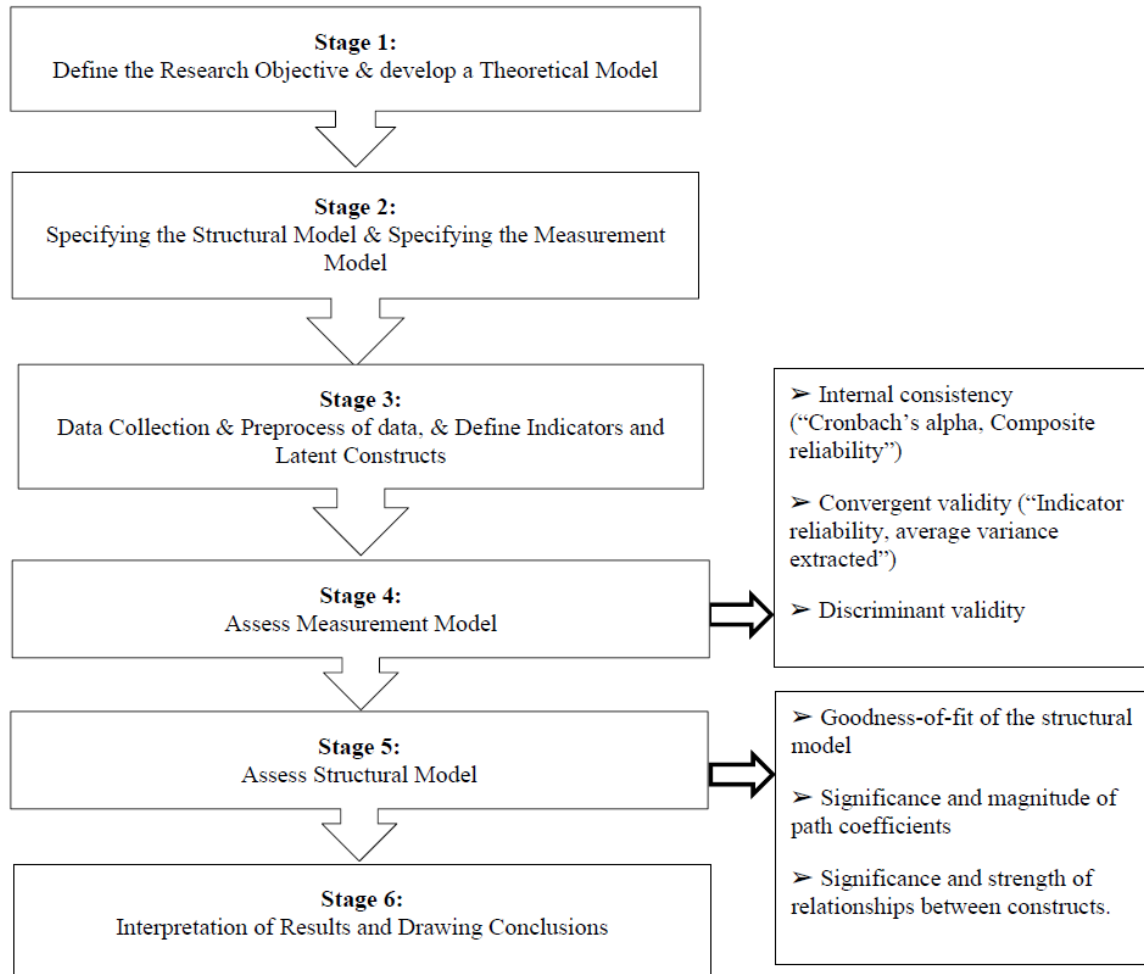


Figure 4.8: Procedure for applying CB-SEM through AMOS.

This study assesses both the measurement and structural models. Figure 4.8 illustrates the steps involved in conducting CB-SEM using AMOS. Asoka (2015) presents a six-step process that facilitates statistical analysis, data interpretation, and the conclusions drawn from research. This study employed a similar approach (Iddris, 2012).

4.4.1 Specifying the Structural Model

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) allows for the simultaneous testing of complex regression equations. SEM encompasses both observed and latent variables, unlike earlier methods that relied exclusively on observed measures. SEM is divided into two main components: measurement models and structural models. The measurement model illustrates the connection between observable and latent variables. The model illustrates how latent variables interact (Asoka, 2015). According to Hair et al. (2016), a structural model must be based on theoretical foundations, logical reasoning, or the observations made by the researcher.

Figure 4.9 illustrates the key characteristics of the structural model, highlighting the roles of both independent (predictor) and dependent (outcome) variables.

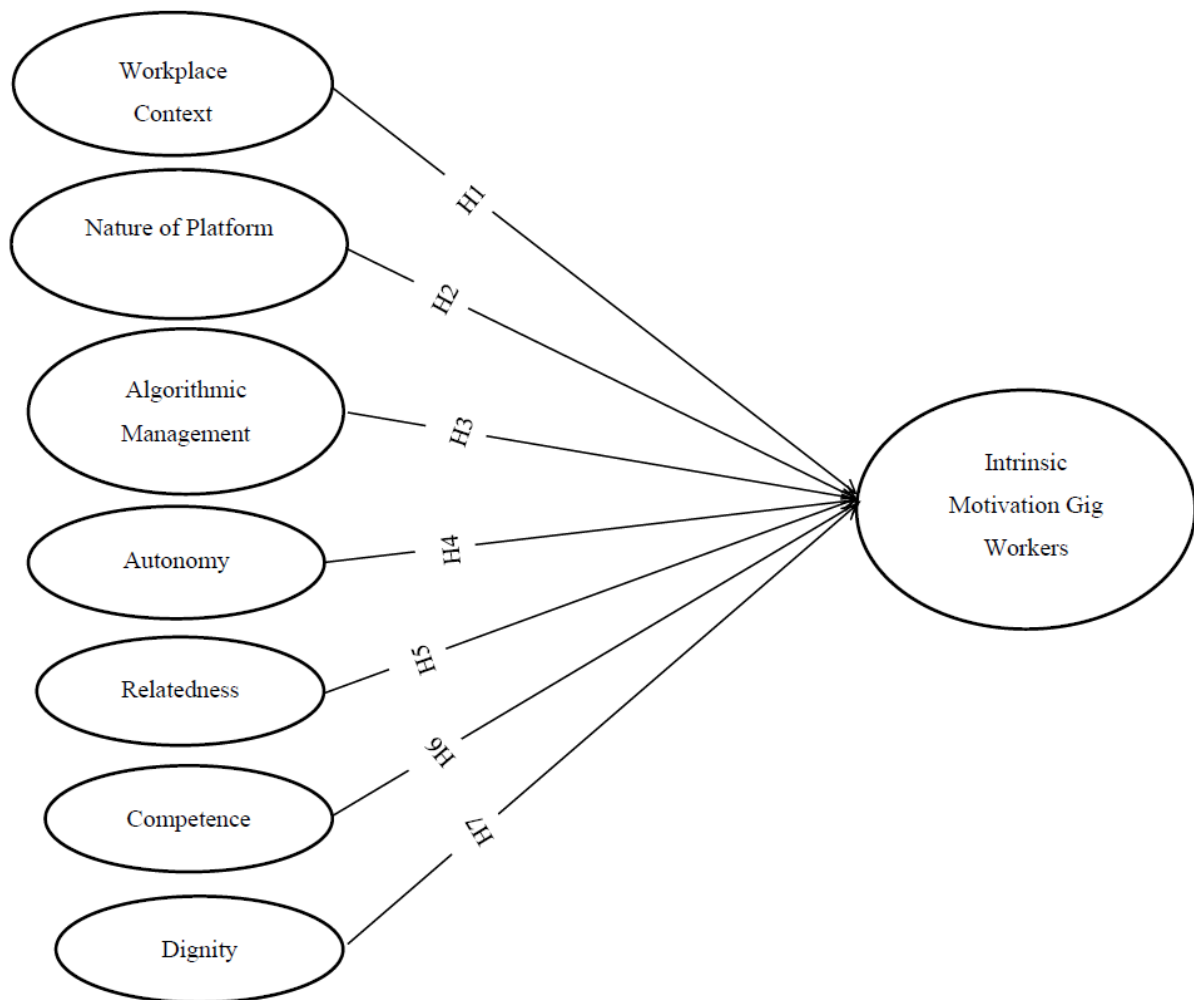


Figure 4.9: Structure for modelling.

This study examines seven independent variables: Workplace Context, Nature of Platform, Algorithmic Management, Autonomy, Relatedness, Competence, and Dignity, alongside one dependent variable: the Intrinsic Motivation of Gig Workers (Khirwadkar and Pinkal Chaudhari, 2012).

4.4.2 Specifying the Measurement Model

The outer measurement models illustrate the relationships between various variables and specific outcomes (Hair et al., 2016). The measurement model illustrates the establishment of connections among indicators. We assess the reliability and validity of indicators through various measurement models. Validating and ensuring the reliability of indicators is crucial for

confirming the structural interactions between variables (Hair et al., 2016). Figure 4.10 presents the measurement model.

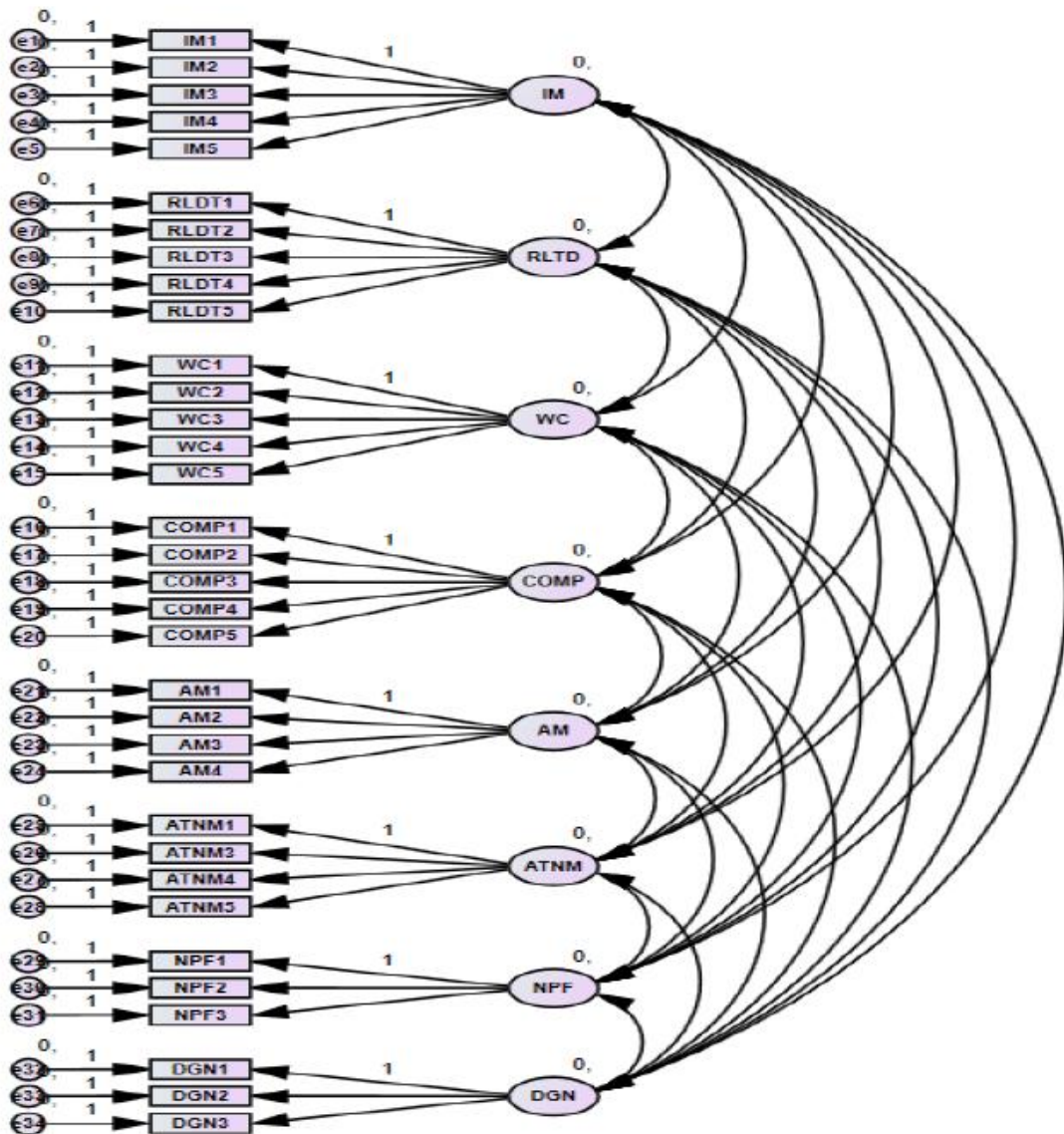


Figure 4.10: Measuring Tool.

4.4.3 Data Collection and Examination

Data was collected using a self-administered survey targeting gig workers who earn through hyperlocal discovery platforms in major and growing cities of Uttar Pradesh, including Lucknow, Prayagraj, Varanasi, Kanpur, Noida, Agra, and Meerut. The survey included a sample of 400 gig workers. Data were collected through both online and offline surveys. We received 315 replies, resulting in a response rate of 78.75%. We removed 15 responses due to their incompleteness. In total, 300 responses were analysed.

4.4.4 Sample Size Estimation

➤ The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Test

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test assessed sample size, while item communalities were calculated from the full sample (n=300). Kaiser (1974) indicates that a KMO value of 0.5 is the minimum acceptable threshold, while values ranging from 0.7 to 0.8 are considered good, and those exceeding 0.9 are regarded as excellent. Table 4.5 presents the KMO test results, showing a KMO value of 0.775 and a BTS significance value of 0.000, indicating it is below the acceptable threshold (Kaiser, 1974). The sample adequacy test is effectively established.

Table 4.5: KMO and Bartlett's Test.

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.775
	Approx. Chi-Square	9618.008
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	df.	561
	Sig	0.000

➤ Commonalities

The communality of a variable refers to the portion of its variance that is accounted for by its common factors. As communalities decrease, the importance of sample size and overdetermination increases. (Kumar and Tasbir, 2016)

Even with communalities around 0.5, a reasonable recovery of population factors is achievable. This requires well-defined factors rather than numerous factors with limited indications, along with a slightly larger sample size, ideally between 100 and 200. Achieving a good recovery of population factors remains feasible, particularly with larger samples exceeding 100, especially when communalities are consistently low, with many or all below 0.5. (Sardar, 2014)

The high overdetermination of factors, with six or seven indicators per factor and a limited number of factors, facilitates effective recovery of population factors. A large sample size is necessary due to low communalities, limited factors, and few indicators per factor; a minimum of 300 participants is advised. A sample size of 100 is deemed necessary when the model contains fewer than five variables, each with more than three items, and the communalities of the items are 0.4 or higher. The minimum sample size required is 300, based on the assumption

that there are no under-identified constructs in the research model and that item communalities are at least 0.5 (MacCallum et al., 1999).

Table 4.6 displays the shared characteristics of various metrics. Table 4.6 indicates that all items have communalities of 0.5 or greater. The findings indicate that a minimum sample size of 200 to 300 is necessary. A total of 300 responses were utilised. The sample adequacy test is deemed properly established as both conditions are satisfied (Stander, 2015).

Table 4.6: Communalities.

Communalities			Communalities		
	Initial	Extraction		Initial	Extraction
WC1	1.000	.900	COMP4	1.000	.719
WC2	1.000	.511	COMP5	1.000	.722
WC3	1.000	.514	RLDT1	1.000	.769
WC4	1.000	.669	RLDT2	1.000	.791
WC5	1.000	.840	RLDT3	1.000	.831
NPF1	1.000	.871	RLDT4	1.000	.864
NPF2	1.000	.885	RLDT5	1.000	.731
NPF3	1.000	.662	DGN1	1.000	.876
AM1	1.000	.708	DGN2	1.000	.907
AM2	1.000	.741	DGN3	1.000	.758
AM3	1.000	.775	IM1	1.000	.575
AM4	1.000	.719	IM2	1.000	.953
ATNM1	1.000	.735	IM3	1.000	.946
ATNM3	1.000	.646	IM4	1.000	.921
ATNM4	1.000	.727	IM5	1.000	.889
ATNM5	1.000	.697	Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis		
COMP1	1.000	.710			
COMP2	1.000	.734			
COMP3	1.000	.648			

➤ **Common Method Variance**

The CMB can arise from diverse data sources, such as the “consistency motif and social desirability” identified in Podsakoff et al. (2003). Ketokivi and Schroeder (2004) emphasise the importance of adequately addressing CMB in survey research. The single-factor test by Harman, detailed in Table 4.7, revealed that the maximum covariance explained by a single factor is 18.423%, falling below the 50% threshold. The analysis in Table 4.7 indicates that CMB is unlikely to contaminate our data.

Table 4.7: Variance Table.

Total Variance						
Component	Initial Eigen Value			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% Of variance	Cumulative %	Total	% Of variance	Cumulative %
1	6.264	18.423	18.423	6.264	18.423	18.423
2	4.771	14.034	32.457			
3	4.388	12.906	45.363			
4	3.532	10.388	55.751			
5	2.816	8.284	64.035			
6	1.715	5.043	69.078			
7	1.329	3.908	72.986			
8	1.089	3.202	76.187			
9	.917	2.697	78.884			
10	.775	2.280	81.164			
11	.634	1.864	83.028			
12	.579	1.702	84.730			
13	.540	1.587	86.317			
14	.511	1.504	87.820			
15	.471	1.384	89.204			
16	.451	1.327	90.531			
17	.408	1.201	91.531			
18	.400	1.176	92.908			

19	.321	.944	93.852
20	.299	.878	94.730
21	.262	.771	95.501
22	.237	.698	96.199
23	.231	.680	96.879
24	.220	.646	97.525
25	.182	.534	98.059
26	.145	.428	98.487
27	.122	.357	98.844
28	.104	.306	99.150
29	.092	.270	99.420
30	.063	.187	99.607
31	.051	.149	99.756
32	.041	.121	99.877
33	.033	.099	99.976
34	.008	.024	100.00

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

4.4.5 Assessment of Measurement Model

The measurement and structural model are analysed using AMOS 24.0. This software evaluates the psychometric properties of the measurement model and estimates the parameters of the structural model. The four evaluations of validity and reliability that are thoroughly examined include discriminant validity, convergent validity, indicator reliability, and internal consistency reliability. The findings from each analysis assessing the measurement model's accuracy and reliability are presented here (Kiani and Ahmed, 2013).

➤ Deleted Items

The SEM model analysis in AMOS enables researchers to remove observed or latent variables based on their statistical characteristics and their impact on the measurement model's fit and reliability. In the process of estimating and refining a model, it is typical to remove certain data points (Chaudhuri and Kumar, 2015).

Table 4.8 presents the observed and latent variables that have been excluded. The variable ATNM2 has been removed due to its outer loadings being below 0.50.

Table 4.8: Dropped Entries.

Construct	Indicator
Autonomy	ATNM2

➤ Data Normality

In structural equation modelling (SEM), it is assumed that the observed variables follow a normal distribution. Statistical methods and tests in AMOS depend on the assumption of normal data distribution, making it essential to verify this condition. If this assumption is violated, the results could be flawed or unreliable. Before conducting SEM analysis in AMOS, it is advisable to assess the normality of the data (Kannabiran and Narayan, 2005).

Researchers can determine the normal distribution of their key indicators by calculating kurtosis and skewness (Kline, 2005). Descriptive statistics allow for the analysis of skewness and kurtosis. Values of skewness ranging from -3 to +3 and kurtosis from -10 to +10 are deemed suitable for structural equation modelling (Blanca et al., 2013). Data is deemed normal if the skewness falls within the range of -2 to +2 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2006). Hair et al. (2010) state that well-distributed data should exhibit skewness values ranging from -2 to +2 and kurtosis values from -7 to +7. Table 4.9 shows that both skewness and kurtosis are low, suggesting a normal distribution of the data. This information can be applied in future research.

Table 4.9: Data Normality

Variable	Min	Max	Skewness	Critical Ratio	Kurtosis	Critical Ratio
DGN3	3.000	5.000	-.190	-1.341	-.578	-2.043
DGN2	2.000	5.000	-.805	-5.692	.680	2.404
DGN1	2.000	5.000	-.823	-5.821	.798	2.821
NPF3	2.000	5.000	-.650	-4.598	.354	1.252
NPF2	2.000	5.000	-.488	-3.448	-.647	-2.289
NPF1	2.000	5.000	-.518	-3.665	-.820	-2.899
ATNM5	1.000	5.000	-.322	-2.276	-1.240	-4.382
ATNM4	1.000	5.000	-.308	-2.174	-1.195	-4.225
ATNM3	1.000	5.000	-.426	-3.011	-1.054	-3.728
ATNM1	1.000	5.000	-.253	-1.788	-1.288	-4.554
AM4	1.000	5.000	.119	.839	-1.497	-5.294
AM3	1.000	5.000	.193	1.363	-1.474	-5.212

Variable	Min	Max	Skewness	Critical Ratio	Kurtosis	Critical Ratio
AM2	1.000	5.000	.182	1.290	-1.394	-4.927
AM1	1.000	5.000	.087	.612	-1.475	-5.215
COMP5	3.000	5.000	.091	.646	.055	.195
COMP4	2.000	5.000	-.150	-1.061	.173	.610
COMP3	2.000	5.000	-.041	-.291	.253	.896
COMP2	2.000	5.000	-.738	-5.220	.872	3.084
COMP1	2.000	5.000	-.048	-.341	.312	1.103
WC5	2.000	5.000	-.683	-4.833	-.186	-.657
WC4	3.000	5.000	-.464	-3.284	-.663	-2.344
WC3	2.000	5.000	-.521	-3.688	-.244	-.862
WC2	2.000	5.000	-.549	-3.882	-.249	-.879
WC1	2.000	5.000	-.445	-3.145	-.790	-2.795
RLDT5	2.000	5.000	-.480	-3.393	-.632	-2.236
RLDT4	3.000	5.000	-.437	-3.088	-.662	-2.339

Variable	Min	Max	Skewness	Critical Ratio	Kurtosis	Critical Ratio
RLDT3	3.000	5.000	-.392	-2.773	-.674	-2.383
RLDT2	3.000	5.000	-.291	-2.056	-1.023	-3.616
RLDT1	3.000	5.000	-.360	-2.546	-.676	-2.391
IM5	3.000	5.000	-.323	-2.285	-.775	-2.741
IM4	3.000	5.000	-.277	-1.958	-.812	-2.870
IM3	3.000	5.000	-.184	-1.301	-.805	-2.846
IM2	3.000	5.000	-.207	-1.464	-.809	-2.862
IM1	2.000	5.000	-.479	-3.390	-.254	-.899
Multivariate					336.722	58.938

➤ Individual Indicator Reliability

Participants completed questionnaires on their own. Researchers frequently use questionnaires to collect data from participants, consisting of a set of predetermined questions. The instrument comprises 34 parameters associated with 8 core components. A threshold of 0.70 was chosen to improve the questionnaire's reliability and reduce measurement errors. Indicators with loadings under 0.70 were thoroughly assessed for their potential importance before removal. AMOS 24.0 enabled a thorough review of reflective indicators through an iterative process. Hair et al. (2016) defines indication dependability as the square of outer loadings, highlighting that it must not be below 0.5 (Narasimha, 2017).

The outer loading should typically be no less than 0.07. As a result, indicators with loadings under 0.70 were removed, adhering to the common guideline. Indications of 0.70 or higher

were re-established, prompting a repetition of the procedure. Indicators with loadings greater than 0.7 were examined iteratively. (Mukherjee and Patel, 2005)

Cronbach's Alpha is commonly utilised to evaluate the reliability of measurement instruments. High-quality building materials Cronbach's Alpha demonstrated that the construct's contents share a comparable range and relevance (Cronbach, 1971). Cronbach's Alpha evaluates reliability by analyzing the correlations between variables. Composite Reliability, as described by Chin (1998), evaluates internal consistency. Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability evaluate internal consistency, but only Composite Reliability considers variations in indicator loadings. (Crittenden and Crittenden, 2021)

Table 4.10 displays the values for Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability (CR). Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.843 to 0.943, while composite reliability statistics were between 0.841 and 0.951. The statistical measures of construct reliability are above 0.70 (Hair et al., 2011), confirming its reliability (Khirwadkar and Pinkal Chaudhari, 2012).

Table 4.10: Construct Validity and Reliability.

Sr. No.	Constructs	Items	Factor				
			loadings	Cronbach alpha	CR	AVE	MSV
1		WC1	0.941	0.869	0.878	0.598	0.316
		WC2	0.648				
	Workplace Context	WC3	0.598				
	(WC)	WC4.	0.729				
		WC5.	0.892				
		NPF1.	0.917				
	Nature of Platform	NPF2.	0.960				
2	(NPF)	NPF3.	0.647	0.876	0.886	0.727	0.330
		ATNM1.	0.816				
		ATNM3.	0.678				
		ATNM4.	0.808				
3	Autonomy (ATNM)	ATNM5.	0.765	0.851	0.852	0.591	0.383
		DG1.	0.942				
		DG2.	1.002				
4	Dignity (DG)	DG3.	0.684	0.905	0.915	0.787	0.330
		COMP1.	0.560				
5	Competence (COMP)	COMP2	0.840	0.843	0.841	0.521	0.316

		COMP3	0.590				
		COMP4	0.735				
		COMP5	0.835				
		RLTD1	0.738				
		RLTD2	0.688				
		RLTD3	0.964				
	RELATEDNESS	RLTD4	0.988				
6	(RLTD)	RLTD5	0.584	0.916	0.900	0.653	0.109
		IM1	0.590				
		IM2	0.996				
		IM3	0.993				
	Intrinsic Motivation	IM4	0.934				
7	(IM)	IM5	0.896	0.943	0.951	0.800	0.032
		AM1.	0.810				
	Algorithmic	AM2	0.777				
8	Management (AM)	AM3	0.854	0.877	0.877	0.641	0.383
		AM4	0.758				

➤ **Convergent Validity**

Convergent validity is defined as the extent to which a measure shows a positive correlation with other measures of the same construct (Hair et al., 2016). Convergent validity is assessed by examining the outer loadings of the indicators and the values of the extracted average variance (AVE). The study examined the convergent validity of the data. Factor loadings for all indicators should exceed 0.50, with values of 0.7 or higher considered excellent (Hair et al., 2009). Additionally, for all constructs, the average variance extracted (AVEs) must exceed 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The data were assessed for convergent validity, construct validity, and reliability, as presented in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10 shows that all item factor loadings exceed 0.5. The average variance extracted (AVEs) values for all latent constructs exceeded 0.5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Consequently, we establish convergent validity.

➤ **Discriminant validity**

Discriminant validity, as defined by Hair et al. (2016), is the extent to which one construct can be distinctly separated from another. To establish discriminant validity, a construct must be clearly distinct from others in the model and must explain occurrences that the other constructs do not address (Hair et al., 2016).

Table 4.11 presents the findings of Discriminant Validity based on Fornell and Larcker's criteria. It indicates that the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct exceeds its correlation with other constructs. This strongly supports the concept of Discriminant Validity.

Table 4.11: Validity and Reliability Matrix.

	IM	RLTD	WC	COMP	AM	ATNM	NPF	DGN
IM	0.895							
RLTD	-0.068	0.808						
WC	0.053	0.146*	0.773					
COMP	-0.178**	0.330***	0.562***	0.722				
AM	0.004	0.087	0.113†	0.157*	0.801			
ATNM	0.116†	0.005	-0.012	0.009	0.619***	0.769		
NPF	0.038	0.085	0.043	0.115†	-0.030	-0.030	0.853	
DGN	0.024	-0.054	0.157**	0.099	-0.049	-0.099	0.574***	0.887

➤ **Cross Loading Analysis**

Cross-loadings arise when an observed variable (item) shows substantial factor loadings across several latent constructs in the measurement model. The object is closely connected to multiple underlying constructs (Mishra and Aditya, 2011). In structural equation modelling (SEM), the measurement model consists of latent components that are indicated by various observable variables. The observed variables are anticipated to effectively reflect the latent construct being measured, supported by strong factor loadings associated with that construct. Cross-loadings occur when an item shows considerable loadings across multiple constructs, suggesting it may not clearly represent any one construct.

Table 4.12 displays the cross-loadings of indicators and items, indicating that each item's factor loading is significantly higher on its respective underlying construct compared to others. The cross-loading study achieved discriminant validity.

Table 4.12: Cross Loadings of Indicators and Items.

	IM	RLDT	WC	COMP	AM	ATNM	NPF	DGN
AM1	.003	.025	.044	.067	.787	.283	-.020	-.038
AM2	.009	.099	.005	.002	.825	.218	.052	.021
AM3	-.031	.036	.020	.093	.839	.235	.003	-.065
AM4	.026	.019	.059	.048	.812	.214	-.072	.041
ATNM1	.054	-.051	-.022	-.024	.257	.812	.044	-.009
ATNM3	.035	-.001	-.030	-.044	.158	.782	-.066	.005
ATNM4	.074	.046	.018	-.007	.275	.799	-.064	-.016
ATNM5	.039	.028	-.039	.076	.266	.773	.067	-.120
COMP1	.296	.051	.079	.775	.044	.012	.102	.000

COMP5	-.273	.180	.301	.721	.046	.009	-.034	-.033
COMP2	-.175	.280	.443	.633	.052	.007	.150	-.055
COMP4	-.209	.228	.114	.774	.014	.020	-.080	.067
COMP3	.120	.017	.160	.757	.096	-.044	.143	.060
WC3	.045	.212	.631	.162	-.068	.071	.063	-.166
WC5	.150	.077	.868	.195	.092	-.010	-.037	.097
WC4	-.003	-.079	.807	.009	.033	-.089	-.028	.043
WC1	.023	.067	.907	.246	.059	-.012	.091	.033
WC2	.041	.113	.683	.117	.004	-.019	-.054	.115
NPF1	.005	.029	.041	.028	-.016	.000	.915	.175
NPF3	-.072	.117	.035	.107	.000	.002	.713	.285
NPF2	.071	.101	-.062	.058	-.016	-.026	.895	.246
RLDT1	-.058	.870	-.023	.047	.028	.003	.065	-.036
RLDT2	-.097	.808	.199	.229	.034	.053	.168	-.066
RLDT3	-.015	.907	.011	.053	.057	-.021	-.027	.001
RLDT4	.012	.924	.047	.081	.032	-.024	-.015	-.018

RLDT5	-.134	.701	.343	.238	.059	.038	.124	-.162
DGN1	.018	-.094	.079	.084	-.033	-.043	.378	.841
DGN2	.019	-.044	.085	.086	-.028	-.045	.409	.848
DGN3	-.016	-.086	-.001	-.064	.008	-.050	.117	.855
IM4	.955	-.061	.013	-.026	.008	.045	-.045	-.001
IM2	.973	-.051	-.004	.007	-.011	.050	-.013	.018
IM5	.936	-.049	.005	-.071	-.021	.067	-.020	-.015
IM1	.651	-.020	.368	.017	.056	-.002	.108	-.013
IM3	.969	-.056	-.019	.006	-.003	.054	-.006	.021

➤ **Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)**

Hair and Sarstedt (2016) defined HTMT as the ratio of correlations between two traits compared to the correlations within a single trait. Unlike the geometric mean of average correlations for indicators of the same construct, HTMT represents the mean of all correlations among indicators across different constructs, specifically focusing on heterotrait-heteromethod correlations (Hair et al., 2016). The HTMT ratio assesses discriminant validity through an estimation of component correlation. The HTMT threshold remains a topic of debate in the literature, yet Kline (2011) suggested a threshold of 0.85 or lower.

Table 4.13 presents the findings from the Discriminant Validity test, specifically the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT), indicating that the HTMT ratio is below 0.85.

Table 4.13: Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT).

	IM	RLTD	WC	COMP	AM	ATNM	NPF	DGN
IM								
RLTD	0.115							
WC	0.132	0.268						
COMP	0.066	0.420	0.528					
AM	0.023	0.125	0.091	0.159				
ATNM	0.115	0.031	0.028	0.015	0.621			
NPF	0.001	0.161	0.061	0.187	0.021	0.030		
DGN	0.022	0.109	0.090	0.072	0.050	0.114	0.594	

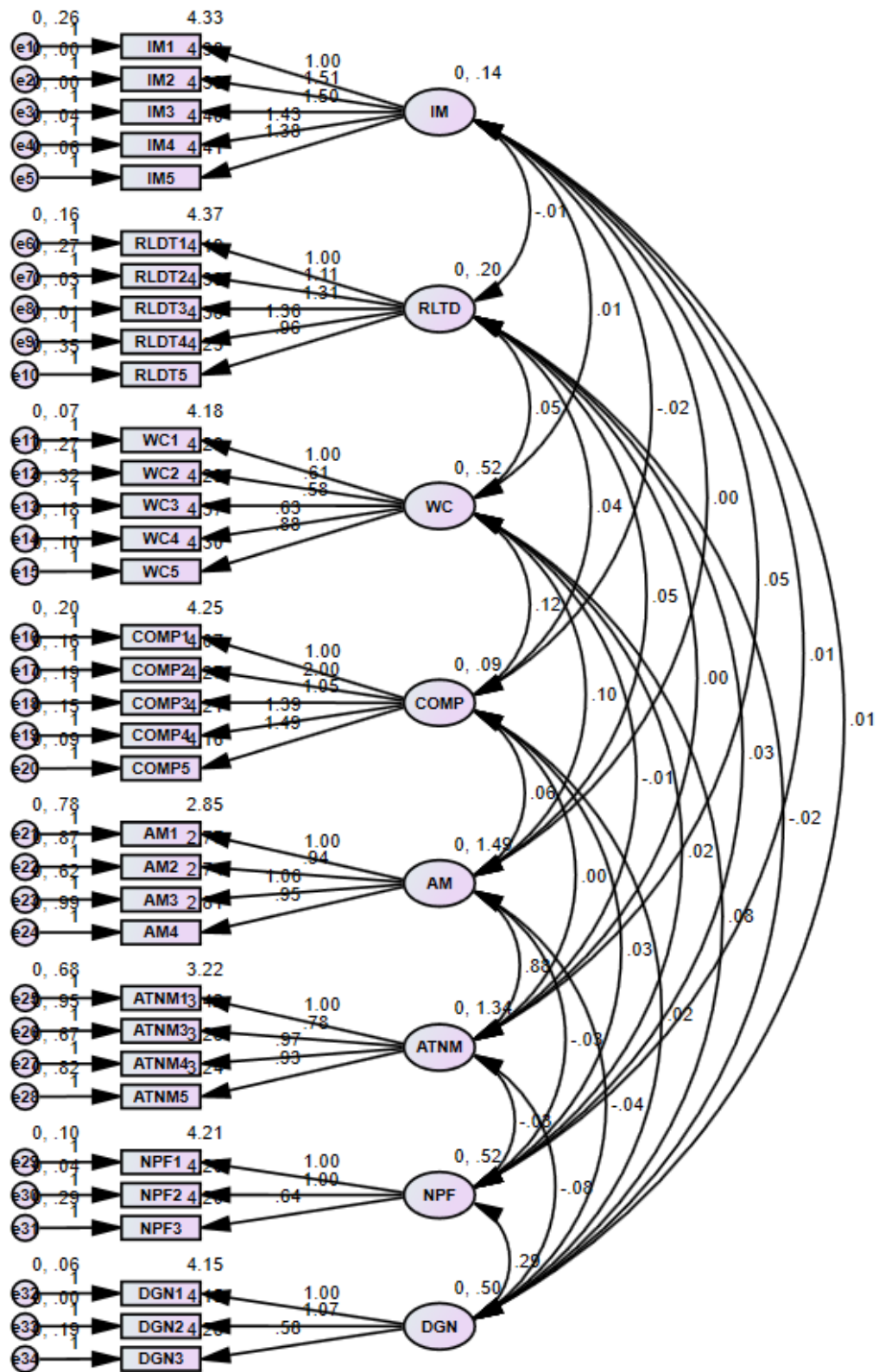


Figure 4.11: Assessment Measurement Model.

4.4.6 Assessment of Structural Model

Evaluating a structural model involves examining its predictive capabilities and the relationships among constructs (Hair et al., 2016). The structural model includes all elements of the construct and their established relationships. The model illustrates the connections between the underlying variables. The subsequent phase of structural equation modelling is hypothesis testing, where the proposed relationships are assessed. The structural model is assessed through the following tests: model fit, collinearity statistics, and hypothesis testing, including path coefficient size and significance.

Two approaches to establish the credibility of a structural model are examining the route coefficients and conducting hypothesis testing, both of which are discussed in the following sections.

➤ The Goodness of Model Fit

The term “Goodness of Model Fit” indicates the degree to which a structural equation model (SEM) aligns with the observed data. This metric assesses the effectiveness of the proposed model in reflecting the relationships among observed variables. Goodness-of-fit indices assess the extent to which the specified model aligns with the observed data in SEM analysis conducted with AMOS. AMOS offers various fit indices for evaluating model fit. Table 4.14 presents the model fit assessment, which includes:

The chi-square statistic is evaluated against the degrees of freedom through CMIN/DF. A lower CMIN/DF value indicates a closer fit. The goal is to achieve a CMIN/DF ratio below 5 for an acceptable fit (Hair et al., 2009). The resulting CMIN/DF value of 3.200 demonstrates a satisfactory and improved fit.

The proposed model is evaluated against a baseline model to assess its data alignment. “Values range from 0 to 1, where higher values indicate a stronger match.” A CFI value of 0.90 or higher is typically seen as indicative of a good fit (Bentler and Bonett, 1980). Thus, with a CFI value of 0.974, the model demonstrates a strong fit.

The RMSEA statistic measures the discrepancy between the proposed model and the population covariance matrix. It considers the complexity of the model alongside the size of the sample. Lower RMSEA values indicate a closer fit. A value of 0.08 or lower suggests a good fit (MacCallum et al., 1996), and the RMSEA result of 0.076 reflects a satisfactory model fit.

The NFI evaluates how well the estimated model performs in comparison to a null model. “Values range from 0 to 1, where higher values indicate a stronger match.” An NFI value exceeding 0.90 is generally seen as reflecting a satisfactory match (Bentler and Bonett, 1980). The NFI score is 0.925, suggesting a good fit for the model.

The RFI assesses how well the estimated model performs in comparison to a baseline model. “Values range from 0 to 1, where higher values indicate a stronger match.” An RFI value above 0.90 suggests a strong fit (Meyers et al., 2005), and with an RFI of 0.911, this model demonstrates a good fit.

The IFI evaluates how well the estimated model performs in comparison to a null model. “Values range from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating a more favourable match.” An IFI value exceeding 0.90 indicates a strong fit (Meyers et al., 2005), and with an IFI of 0.948, this suggests a good model fit.

PNFI and PCFI assess model fit, considering the complexity of the model. “Values range from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating a closer match.” A PNFI and PCFI above 0.50 generally indicates a strong fit (Meyers et al, 2005). The PNFI and PCFI values of 0.782 suggest a robust fit for the model.

AGFI assesses how well a model fits by considering its complexity and the degrees of freedom involved. Values range from 0 to 1, where higher values indicate a better match. An AGFI above 0.80 is generally seen as a good fit (Hair et al., 2009), and with an AGFI of 0.821, this suggests a strong model fit.

Table 4.14: Goodness of Fit of a Model.

Parameters	Recommended values	Observed Value	Within Acceptable Range
	<5.0 (Marsh & Hocevar, 1985)		
	<5.0 Reported if n>200 (Benter, 1990)		
	<3.0 Good, <5.0 Sometimes Permissible (Hair et al., 2009)	3.200	Yes
CMIN/DF			
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	> .90 (Bentler and Bonett, 1980)	0.947	Yes
	> .90 (Hatcher, 1994)		
	<.08 (Byrne, 2001)		
	<.05 (Hu & Benter, 1999)		
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	<.08 Good .98 to .1 Moderate fit >.1 Poor fit (Meyers et al, 2005)	0.076	Yes
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	.90 or above (Bentler and Bonett, 1980)	0.925	Yes
Relative Fit Index (RFI)	>.90 (Meyers et al, 2005)	0.911	Yes
Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	>.90 (Meyers et al, 2005)	0.948	Yes
Parsimony Normed Fixed Index (PNFI) Parsimony	>.5 (Meyers et al, 2005)	0.782	Yes
Comparative Fixed Index (PC)	>.5 (Meyers et al, 2005)	0.913	Yes
Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI)	>0.80 (Hair et al., 2009)	0.821	Yes

➤ Hypothesis Testing

Calculating a P value for each route coefficient is a common method for hypothesis testing within Amos. The P value may be one-tailed or two-tailed, based on whether the researcher is aware of the path's direction and the corresponding coefficient's sign.

A. H01: Integrating e-commerce platforms improves the sales performance, customer acquisition, and retention capacities of direct selling enterprises in India.

This research examined how the integration of E-commerce platforms improves the performance, customer acquisition, and retention capabilities of direct selling enterprises in India, collectively termed as “workplace environment,” and influences the intrinsic motivation of gig workers. The study found a positive and significant relationship between workplace context and the intrinsic motivation of gig workers ($b = .033$, $t = 3.535$, $p > 0.01$), leading to the acceptance of the null hypothesis.

B. H02: Direct selling companies in India face significant operational, technological, and infrastructural challenges when transitioning from traditional models to e-commerce-integrated systems.

This research examined how the direct selling companies in India face significant operational, technological, and infrastructural challenges when transitioning from traditional models to e-commerce-integrated systems. The term “Nature of Platform” influences the intrinsic motivation of workers/digital entrepreneurs. The connection between the platform's nature and gig workers' intrinsic motivation was found to be positive but not significant ($b = .029$, $t = .721$, $p > 0.05$), leading to the acceptance of the null hypothesis for H2.

C. H03: E-commerce and direct selling models provide a viable and attractive employment alternative for Indian youth, promoting entrepreneurship over dependence on conventional government jobs.

This research examined how E-commerce and direct selling models provide a viable and attractive employment alternative for Indian youth, promoting entrepreneurship over dependence on conventional government jobs termed as “algorithmic management,” which influences the intrinsic motivation of workers. The connection between algorithmic management and the intrinsic motivation of gig workers was found to be positive yet significant ($b = .021$, $t = -1.013$, $p > 0.05$), leading to the acceptance of H3, the null hypothesis.

D. H04: Integration of e-commerce with direct selling significantly contributes to reducing unemployment and underemployment among India’s educated youth.

This research examined how the integration of e-commerce with direct selling significantly contributes to reducing unemployment and underemployment among India’s educated youth;

“Autonomy” relates to the intrinsic motivation of workers. The connection between autonomy and intrinsic motivation among gig workers was found to be positive and significant ($b = .051$, $t = 2.173$, $p > 0.05$), leading to the acceptance of the null hypothesis and contradicting H4.

E. H05: E-commerce and direct selling play a positive role in narrowing income disparities by offering inclusive earning opportunities across various socio-economic strata.

The research examined how the E-commerce and direct selling play a positive role in narrowing income disparities by offering inclusive earning opportunities across various socio-economic strata; “Competence” relates to the intrinsic motivation for workers. The study found a significant positive relationship between competence and intrinsic motivation among workers ($b = .049$, $t = -4.726$, $p > 0.01$), leading to the acceptance of the null hypothesis H05.

F. H06: Increased women’s participation in e-commerce and direct selling significantly contributes to GDP growth and improves socio-economic indicators in India.

This research examined how the increased women’s participation in e-commerce and direct selling significantly contributes to GDP growth and improves socio-economic indicators in India. Relatedness influences the intrinsic motivation of workers. The connection between relatedness and intrinsic motivation among workers was found to be positive but not statistically significant ($b = .050$, $t = -.082$, $p > 0.05$), leading to the acceptance of H6, the null hypothesis. A primary reason for that may be due to the less participation of the women in the study.

G. H07: The smart micro e-franchisee model fosters flexible, inclusive work arrangements that empower marginalised groups irrespective of gender, caste, religion, or geography.

This research examined how the smart micro e-franchisee model fosters flexible, inclusive work arrangements that empower marginalised groups irrespective of gender, caste, religion, or geography. “Small and micro franchises” relate to the intrinsic motivation of workers (gig workers or digital sellers). The connection between the scale of the enterprise. The intrinsic motivation among gig workers was found to be positive but not statistically significant ($b = .029$, $t = .139$, $p > 0.05$), leading to the acceptance of the null hypothesis H7.

Table 4.15: Hypothesis Table.

S. No.	Hypothesis Testing	Standardize d Estimates	t- Value	p- Value	Sign	Conclusion
--------	--------------------	-------------------------	----------	----------	------	------------

H1	Workplace context- (Intrinsic motivation)	0.033	3.535	0.408	----	Accepted
H2	Nature of Platform- (Intrinsic motivation)	0.029	0.721	0.071	---	Accepted
H3	Algorithmic Management- (Intrinsic motivation)	0.021	-1.013	0.311	----	Accepted
	Employment/ under				---	
H4	Employment/ unemployment (Intrinsic motivation)	0.029	2.173	0.113		Accepted
H5	Competence- (Intrinsic Motivation)	0.042	-4.726	0.230	---	Accepted
H6	Women Participation- (Intrinsic motivation)	0.050	-0.082	0.359	---	Accepted
	Spirituality/peace/contempt				---	
H7	- (Intrinsic motivation)	0.029	0.139	0.489		Accepted

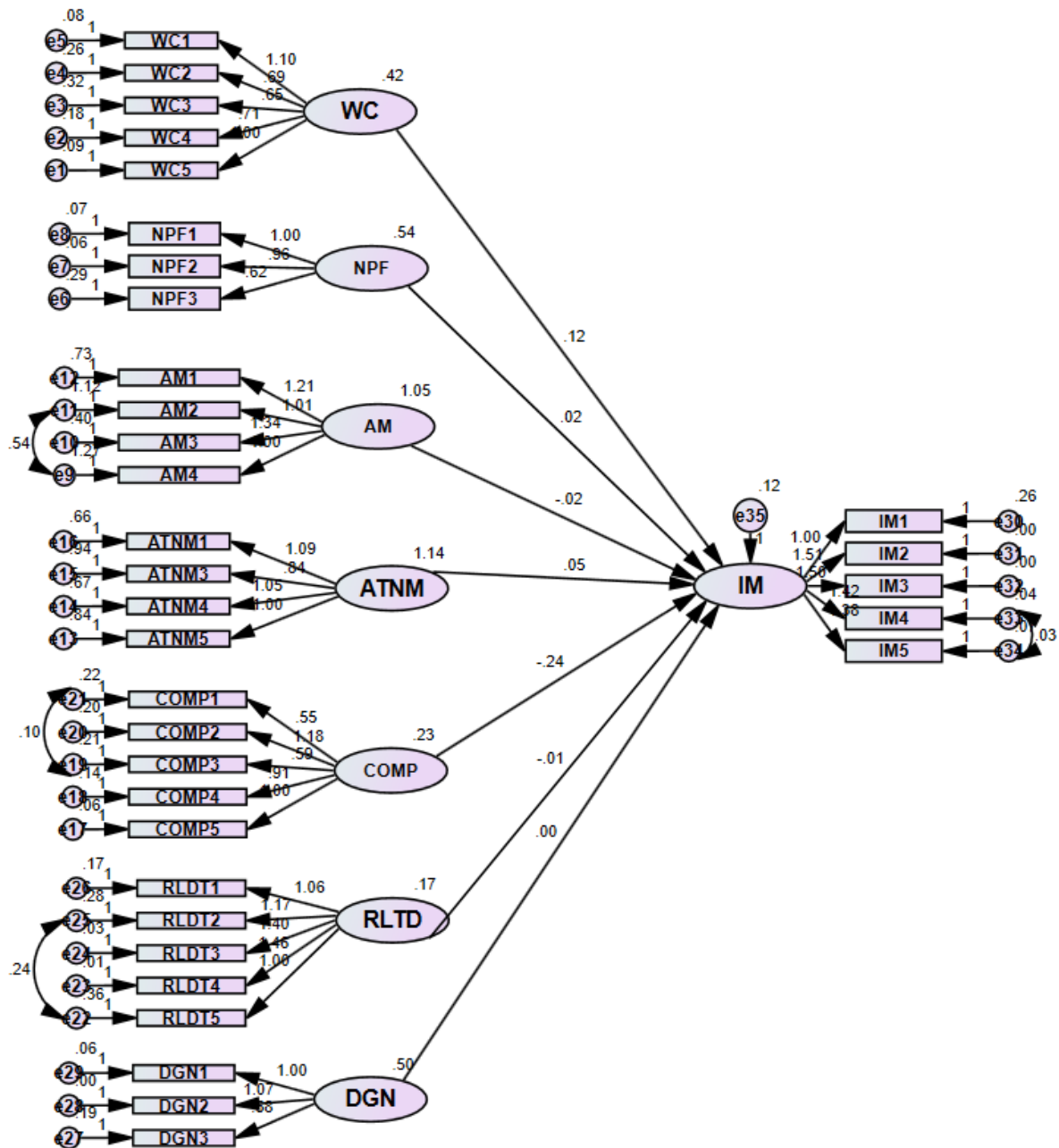


Figure 4.12: Structural model for assessment.

4.5 Chapter Conclusion/Summary

This chapter presents the inquiry's findings and the results of the statistical analysis. A discussion focused on the traits of the respondents took place. Additionally, various alternative strategies for employing CB-SEM with Amos were examined. The assessment of the measurement model included various tests to evaluate the data's reliability and validity.

The measurement model demonstrated satisfactory validity and reliability. The overall reliability scores for all constructs, exceeding 0.7, indicate a strong level of internal

consistency. The AVEs fell within the acceptable range, indicating that the structural model achieved adequate convergent and discriminant validity, thus confirming its overall validity. The square roots of AVE for each construct exceeded their intercorrelation, and all manifest variables were appropriately loaded onto their respective latent variables. The results of validating the structural model were favourable. Adequate model fit is indicated by the following criteria: $CMIN/DF \leq 0.5$; CFI, NFI, RFI, and IFI > 0.90 ; $RMSEA \leq 0.08$; NFI, PNFI, and PCFI > 0.50 ; and AGFI > 0.80 .

The seven hypothesised pathways in the structural model were quantified, revealing that some links are strong while others are weaker. The structural model reveals significant connections at the 0.05 level among Workplace Context (WC), Autonomy (ATNM), Competence (COMP), and Intrinsic Motivation (IM). However, no significant relationships were found between Nature of the Platform (NPF), Algorithmic Management (AM), Relatedness (RLTD), Dignity (DGN), and Intrinsic Motivation (IM).

Chapter V: Conclusions, Limitations, Future Directions

5.1 Summary of the Study

Chapter 1-Introduction:

This chapter examined the primary motivating factors for gig workers on digital labour platforms in India, focusing on app-based hyperlocal discovery platforms. This chapter outlines the study's background and necessity, provides an overview of the gig economy, and discusses digital labour platforms, their types, and the gig economy in India. This chapter examines the economic effects of gig economy platforms, the employment landscape within this sector, and the interactions among gig workers. This chapter explored the management of platform workers via effective design, the application of self-determination theory in digital labour, and the ideas surrounding hyperlocal discovery platforms and app-based approaches to them. This chapter discusses notable app-based hyperlocal start-ups in India, explores motivational factors within the gig economy, presents market statistics for hyperlocal applications, and outlines the organisation of the chapters.

Chapter 2-Review of Literature:

This chapter reviewed prior studies on the key motivating factors for gig workers on digital labour platforms in India, focusing on app-based hyperlocal discovery platforms. A literature review helped the researcher engage with the existing knowledge in the relevant study area. The literature review provides both the audience and the researcher with a comprehensive overview of the extensive information previously developed on the topic.

This chapter reviews previous studies on the latest technological wave that transformed the industrial and labour landscape, highlighting how digital platforms and the gig economy have influenced local entrepreneurship. This chapter reviewed existing literature on working conditions in India's platform-based economy, highlighting the significant rise in gig workers participating in these businesses. This chapter outlines the goals, methodologies, and findings from the reviews conducted by different authors.

Chapter 3-Research Methodology:

The chapter covered research techniques, data categories, sampling, research area, participant numbers, and data collection methods. Both primary and secondary data were essential for achieving the study's objectives. Structured questionnaires served as the main method for data collection. This chapter addressed the conceptual framework and research methods. This

chapter also discusses the research and conceptual designs. The study's independent variable encompassed workplace context, platform nature, algorithmic management, competence needs, relatedness needs, autonomy needs, and dignity. The study focused on "Intrinsic motivation" as the dependent variable. Data was gathered from 300 gig workers utilising hyperlocal discovery platforms in key cities of Uttar Pradesh, including Lucknow, Prayagraj, Varanasi, Kanpur, Noida, Agra, and Meerut. The study employed purposive and cluster sampling techniques. Secondary data sources comprised reports, research papers, textbooks, and both national and international articles and journals. The study utilised SPSS, AMOS, and Excel. The study employed CB SEM and regression analysis and assessed reliability and validity.

Chapter 4-Data Analysis and Interpretation:

This chapter outlines various statistical tools and techniques for data collection and evaluates the study's hypothesis, validity, dependability, and objectivity. To achieve the study's objectives and test the hypotheses, data were collected using various tests. This research focused on the main motivating factors for gig workers using digital labour platforms in India, specifically through an app-based approach to hyperlocal discovery platforms. This chapter focused on data interpretation, which aids in categorising, manipulating, and summarising information to address key questions. This chapter presents the findings derived from the application of different statistical methods. Data processing involves the use of CB SEM, regression, reliability, and validity. This chapter presents a statistical analysis of the data and findings to support the proposed research or theoretical model. This chapter examines data processing and interpretation through the results of experiments utilising a statistical approach. This chapter presents the AMOS data as suggested by prior studies. This study may explore the implementation of the structural and measurement model through CB-SEM analysis. This chapter aimed to analyse the structural model and assess the reliability and validity of the measurement model.

5.2 Conclusions

India, which has a vast youth population and an economy that is expanding at a rapid rate, continues to struggle with the combined dilemma of increasing unemployment and decreasing underemployment. According to the findings of the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) conducted in 2024, India's unemployment rate decreased to 3.1%; nevertheless, the issue of underemployment continued to be a serious problem, particularly among educated young people and notably in urban areas. According to the Ministry of Social and Public Institutions

(2024), a sizeable proportion of the labour force is currently working in informal employment or roles that do not make full use of their capabilities, resulting in an underutilisation of human resources. In this setting, e-commerce and direct selling emerge not just as alternative employment generators but also as transforming platforms for holistic development, which includes financial, mental, and spiritual growth. Work arrangements have been rethought because of the growth of the gig economy, which is characterised by work that is flexible and enabled by digital technology.

New job opportunities have emerged because of the proliferation of gig platforms such as Zomato, Urban Company, Swiggy, Ola, and Rapido. According to the findings of the study, 34.7% of respondents were associated with Zomato alone, which demonstrates the large scope of employment opportunities based on gig work in Indian metropolitan areas. The research, on the other hand, places an emphasis on the qualitative aspects of this employment pattern, going beyond the simple generation of jobs. According to the findings of the regression analysis, it is abundantly obvious that autonomy and competence considerably boost the intrinsic motivation of gig workers, which is essential to their continued involvement. These psychological characteristics contribute to the mental resilience and satisfaction of workers, so addressing not only the economic element of individuals' well-being but also their emotional and spiritual well-being as well.

A deeper feeling of self-worth, purpose, and accountability is developed in a gig worker who has the autonomy to choose when, where, and how to work. These are attributes that are vital for both personal development and societal harmony within the gig worker community. On the financial front, direct selling methods that are combined with e-commerce (such as Amway's digital transformation or Amazon's affiliate marketing program) have made it possible for young people to produce revenue with a low amount of initial capital commitment. The use of these platforms, which function as digital micro-franchisee models, democratises the ownership of businesses and eliminates traditional hurdles such as the price of infrastructure and geographical constraints and restrictions.

This is a particularly important possibility for women, homemakers, and young people living in rural areas, who sometimes encounter structural and societal obstacles when attempting to gain access to formal employment opportunities. These opportunities not only assist in closing the gender gap in terms of labour participation, but they also contribute to the growth of the GDP in a way that is inclusive. In addition, the combination of technology, entrepreneurialism,

and skill-building creates a significant opportunity for the future. There is a regulatory and infrastructural backbone that supports the goals of the youth in direct selling and digital entrepreneurship.

This backbone is provided by government initiatives such as Start-up India, Digital India, and Skill India. Young people have been able to convert from being job seekers to job creators thanks to the rich ecosystem that has been established by these frameworks, which, when paired with the increasing internet prevalence and smartphone usage, has been created. From a spiritual and philosophical point of view, the transition away from strict and stressful employment structures and towards more self-directed gig and direct selling models is in line with the traditional Indian values of Swaraj (self-rule), self-sufficiency, and balance.

These employment opportunities not only provide financial support, but they also provide mental clarity, reduced dependency, and a sense of commitment to society. All these benefits are essential in a world that is uncertain after a pandemic has occurred. Despite this, difficulties still exist. Even though autonomy increases employee engagement, certain components, such as algorithmic management and platform control, pose hazards to the dignity of workers and the stability of their jobs. According to the findings of the study, the connection between platform design and intrinsic motivation is still rather weak. This suggests that there is a requirement for more empathic algorithm design and the establishment of fair platform governance.

The conclusion is that E-commerce and direct selling are more than just techniques for the creation of jobs; they are also the embodiment of a holistic socio-economic model that solves structural employment difficulties, fosters youth entrepreneurship, promotes digital literacy, and improves mental and spiritual well-being. The adoption of this model could pave the way for a sustainable, inclusive, and self-sustaining economic future for India, a country that is on the verge of being the largest contributor of workers in the world.

5.3 Limitations of the Current Study

- a) Research was restricted to the state of Uttar Pradesh.
- b) The number of responders in the sample was restricted to 300.
- c) The scope of the research was restricted to "gig workers, digital labour platforms, and hyperlocal discovery platforms" alone.
- d) The respondents' perspectives were biased, and it is impossible to prevent this from happening.

e) The research involved direct interaction with the participants in the study.

There was no attempt made to conduct a cross-platform analysis.

5.4 Implications of the Study

This research aims to offer important insights into the gig economy's dynamics, influencing policy development, improving working conditions, and enhancing the experiences of gig workers. This study will identify key motivating factors to help digital labour platforms enhance worker satisfaction through effective design and implementation measures.

Addressing fair compensation, flexible hours, and job autonomy can foster a positive work environment, enhancing worker satisfaction. This research aims to establish fair wages, labour protections, and social security benefits for gig workers, while also examining the social and economic effects of the gig economy. The study will promote the exchange of best practices within the industry, encouraging healthy competition and enhancing the gig economy ecosystem. Digital labour platforms can improve worker retention and engagement by implementing customised incentives and recognition initiatives.

This research is essential for developing effective policies, enhancing worker welfare, and fostering sustainable, inclusive gig economy environments. This study addresses the concerns of gig workers and aims to improve their working conditions, promoting a fair and equitable environment that supports their well-being and livelihoods. This allows policymakers, platforms, and stakeholders to make informed decisions that improve the functioning and social impact of digital labour platforms in India. This will emphasise the necessity for regulations that guarantee fair compensation, safeguard workers' rights, and offer social benefits. Understanding this knowledge is essential for tackling the specific challenges of gig work, including income instability, job insecurity, and restricted access to conventional employment benefits.

5.5 Future Directions

Future research will enhance our understanding of the gig economy and its impact on workers. By conducting in-depth surveys, interviews, and data analysis, researchers can identify the key motivational factors that significantly impact gig workers across various sectors and regions in India. This research aims to help platform operators, lawmakers, and businesses create better incentive systems, enhance worker satisfaction, and promote fair labour practices. The upcoming study will examine how these motivational factors impact gig workers' well-being,

career paths, and socioeconomic status over time, potentially informing targeted interventions for a more sustainable and inclusive gig economy.

Future studies will conduct detailed qualitative and quantitative investigations, enabling researchers to understand the key motivators influencing gig workers, including financial incentives, job autonomy, social connections, and platform reputation. Additionally, examining how hyperlocal discovery platforms influence worker motivation and engagement will provide insights into the transformative role of app-based solutions in India's labour market. This research could inform policy recommendations to enhance the experiences, well-being, and productivity of gig workers.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abbas, S.A. (2018) 'Entrepreneurship and information technology businesses in economic crisis', *Entrepreneurship and Sustainability Issues*, 5(3), pp. 682–692.
- Abdulrazaq, B.O. and Lambe, E.O. (2024) 'Unemployment Challenges in Nigeria: The Imperative for Economic Diversification', *Kashere Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 2(2), pp. 302–317.
- African Union Commission, A.U. (2021) 'Digital transformation for youth employment and agenda 2063 in West Africa'.
- Agarwal, C.L. (2019) 'Marketing Strategy of Zomato- A Successful Indian Startup', *JAMSHEDPUR RESEARCH REVIEW*, p. 44.
- Ageron, B., Bentahar, O. and Gunasekaran, A. (2020) 'Digital supply chain: challenges and future directions', *Supply Chain Forum: An International Journal*, 21(3), pp. 133–138.
- Aggarwal, D.P. (2021) 'A Contemporary Model Of Business: E-Entrepreneurship And Its Prospects, Constraints, And Prerequisites In The Indian Perspective', *International Journal of Scientific Research in Engineering and Management (IJSREM)*, UGC and ISSN Approved, *International Peer Reviewed Refereed Indexed Journal*, Impact Factor, 4.
- Alkan, Ö., Güney, E. and Kılınç, A. (2023) 'Predictors of online shopping behavior of women in Turkey: a model and empirical study', *International Journal of Contemporary Economics and Administrative Sciences*, 13(1), pp. 410–442.
- Anand, M.K. and Murthy, M.K. (2024) 'Entrepreneurship as a Source of Employment to Youth in India and the Role of Government and Educational Institutions in Shaping the Entrepreneurial Mindset'.
- Asari, A. *et al.* (2023) 'Manajemen Pemasaran di Era Digital'. CV. ISTANA AGENCY. Available at: <https://repository.um.ac.id/3005/> (Accessed: 18 July 2025).
- Asavatitanonta, T. (2003) 'Opportunities and challenges for satellite communication: case study in Thailand'. Available at: <https://repository.au.edu/bitstreams/3db481d7-f8f5-4dd6-a484-93b81f0be601/download> (Accessed: 19 July 2025).
- Asore, E.P. (2022) 'Leveraging digital marketing in developing countries for job creation and economic development', *International Journal of Management Science and Business Analysis*, 24(7), pp. 333–356.
- Aun, L.H. (2020) 'Unemployment among Malaysia's youth: Structural trends and current challenges'.
- Azu, N.P. (2022) 'Consequences of Digitalisation in Curbing Female Unemployment in West Africa', (Accessed: 26 June 2025).
- Babli, J.N. (2021) 'E-commerce platform & its opportunities in Bangladesh: A study on Kablewala Bangladesh Corporation.'

- Bacasmas, J.A.V., Carlos, J.C.T. and Katigbak, J.J.P. (2022) *E-commerce adoption and its impact on the performance of women-led MSMEs in Metro Manila: An ex-ante study for RCEP*. PIDS Discussion Paper Series.
- Bala, M. and Verma, D. (2018) 'A critical review of digital marketing', *International Journal of Management, IT and Engineering*, 8(10), pp. 321–339.
- Banerjee, S. and Banerjee, D. (2017) 'Coping strategy as correlates of online shopping attitude of young adults of Kolkata.', *Indian Journal of Health & Wellbeing*, 8(10).
- Banu, H. (2022) *A mini project report on "A detailed study on B2B E-commerce as an economic booster"*. PhD Thesis. City University.
- Barasa, L. and Kiiru, J.M. (2023) 'The Digital Economy and Youth Employment in Africa', in G. Onyango (ed.) *Public Policy and Technological Transformations in Africa*. Cham: Springer International Publishing, pp. 161–182. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-18704-9_7.
- Beek, J. (2019) 'Travelling multi-level marketing schemes and whispers of fraud in Kenya', *Social Anthropology/Anthropologie Sociale*, 27(3), pp. 501–516.
- Belsare, P.P. (2019) *A Project Report on "To Study the Promotional Strategies Adopted by Zomato Online Delivery in Nagpur City"*. PhD Thesis. Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj Nagpur University.
- Ben Romdhane, Y., Kammoun, S. and Loukil, S. (2024) 'The impact of Fintech on inflation and unemployment: the case of Asia', *Arab Gulf Journal of Scientific Research*, 42(1), pp. 161–181.
- Bhalekar, V. (2020) 'Novel Corona virus pandemic-impact on Indian economy, E-commerce, education and employment', *E-commerce, Education and Employment (April 19, 2020)* [Preprint].
- Bhanver, J. and Bhanver, K. (2017) *CLICK! The Amazing Story of India's E-commerce Boom and Where It's Headed*. Hachette UK.
- Bishwakarma, S., Devkota, N. and Bista, S. (2024) 'Exploring the rise of the gig economy in Nepal: Shifting dynamics and implications for the future of gig work', *Journal of Business and Management*, 8(2), pp. 130–149.
- Bosson, A. et al. (2022) 'How African cities can create digital jobs.' BCG.
- Brown, T., Phillips, C. and Ali, S.S. (2024) 'Skill acquisition within a (more-than-human) community of practice: A study of beekeeping in Punjab, India', *Journal of Rural Studies*, 110, p. 103358.
- Calvão, F. and Thara, K. (2019) *Working futures: The ILO, automation and digital work in India*. Brill Nijhoff.
- Canals-Cerda, J.J. (2006) 'Advertising as a Signal in an Internet Auctions Market', *Available at SSRN 935093* [Preprint].

Chandra, P., Dutta, P. and Yeh, C.-H. (2022) 'Role of E-Commerce Coupled with Digital Technology During COVID-19 Crisis in Asia', in Behl, A. et al., *World Scientific Series in Asian Business and Management Studies*. WORLD SCIENTIFIC, pp. 359–387. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1142/9789811245992_0018.

Charles, L., Xia, S. and Coutts, A.P. (2022) 'Digitalization and employment', *International Labour Organization Review*, pp. 1–53.

Chatterjee, P. (2008) 'Democracy and Economic Transformation in India', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 43(16), pp. 53–62.

Chaudhuri, P. and Kumar, A. (2015) 'Role of digitization and e-commerce in indian economic growth: an employment generation perspective', *Research Gate*. December [Preprint].

Chawaria, S. (2024) 'Impact of start-ups on Indian economy', *Journal of Philanthropy and Marketing*, 4(1), pp. 289–299.

Chen, G., Ruan, S. and Wang, X. (2023) 'A Study on Internet Chinese Companies' Response to "The Holding Foreign Companies Accountable Act"', in *2023 3rd International Conference on Financial Management and Economic Transition (FMET 2023)*. Atlantis Press, pp. 95–109.

Chibvura, F.R., Doba, Y.G. and Mupamhanga, M.M. (2023) 'E-retailing as innovative entrepreneurship and enhancing employment creation: A case study of PLANET54. COM,' in *Mbali Conference 2023 Proceedings*, p. 108.

Choudhury, D.M. and Srikanth, I.G. (2014) 'A Comparative Study on'E-Commerce Verses M-Commerce: The Future of Online Marketing'', *Choudhury, M. & Srikanth, IG (2014), A Comparative Study On" E-Commerce Verses M-Commerce: The Future of Online Marketing"*, *National research Journal of Sales & Marketing Management*, 1(2).

Chow, H.K., Choy, K.L. and Lee, W.B. (2007) 'Knowledge management approach in build-to-order supply chains', *Industrial management & data systems*, 107(6), pp. 882–919.

Chris Coward, I. (2014) 'Digital opportunities: Innovative ICT solutions for youth employment'.

Cilliers, D.P. et al. (2024) 'Towards glint and glare impact assessment best practice', *Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal*, 42(5), pp. 498–504. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14615517.2024.2420535>.

Cochran, S.L. et al. (2021) *Direct Selling: A Global and Social Business Model*. Business Expert Press.

Cordes, D.L. and Marinova, D. (2023) 'Systematic literature review of the role of e-commerce in providing pathways to sustainability for poverty alleviation in Sub-Saharan Africa', *Discover Sustainability*, 4(1), p. 7. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43621-022-00109-3>.

Crittenden, W.F., and Crittenden, V.L. (2021) 'Direct Selling in the Global Marketplace', *Direct Selling*, p. 77.

Cueto, L.J. et al. (2022) 'Digital innovations in MSMEs during economic disruptions: experiences and challenges of young entrepreneurs', *Administrative Sciences*, 12(1), p. 8.

Das, G. (2019) *Jobonomics: India's employment crisis and what the future holds*. Hachette India.

Deshmukh, A.R., Sehgal, M.M., and Kumar, M.Y. (2022) 'A study on impact of E-Commerce in Indian economy in 21st century: Issues and Challenges.'

Elshaiekh, N.E. *et al.* (2023) 'An empirical analysis of factors motivating unemployed individuals to engage in digital entrepreneurship in Oman: Focus on technological infrastructure', *Sustainability*, 15(17), p. 12953.

Falguieres, M. *et al.* (2015) 'Investigating the impact of short food supply chain on emigration: A study of Valencia community in Spain', *IFAC-Papers On-Line*, 48(3), pp. 2226–2232.

Fan, X. (2001) *Communications and information in China: Regulatory issues, strategic implications*. University Press of America.

Farooq, Q. *et al.* (2019) 'A Review of Management and Importance of E-Commerce Implementation in Service Delivery of Private Express Enterprises of China', *Sage Open*, 9(1), p. 2158244018824194. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244018824194>.

Fekadu, S. (2023) *Practice, challenges, and opportunities of quest-business for promoting sexual and reproductive health information in Addis Ketema sub-city, woreda 7 and 8*.

Ghare, M. (2025) 'A review of Initiatives by Government to Tackle the challenges in Indian Employment Scenario'.

Graham, G. and Hanna, N. (2011) 'Re-connect Canada: A Community-based e-development Strategy', *Journal of the Knowledge Economy*, 2(1), pp. 38–76. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13132-010-0025-4>.

Gulabdin, S. *et al.* (2022) 'The effect of social influence and interpersonal identification on the relationship between personality and performance of agents in the multilevel marketing (mlm) industry', *Malaysian E Commerce Journal (MECJ)*, 6(1), pp. 44–53.

Iddris, F. (2012) 'Adoption of E-commerce Solutions in Small and Medium-sized Enterprises in Ghana'.

Indhumathi, G. (2021) 'A Study on The Challenges Faced by Women Distributors In Multi-Level Marketing With Respect To Single Line Products In Chennai City.', *Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry*, 12(5).

Jacobs, G. and Slaus, I. (2011) 'Global prospects for full employment', *Cadmus*, 1(2), pp. 60–89.

Jaiswal, B. (2018) 'E-commerce of Handicraft'. Available at: <https://www.theseus.fi/handle/10024/159502> (Accessed: 26 June 2025).

Javed, A. (2020) 'Impact of COVID-19 on Pakistan's services sector', *Jurnal Inovasi Ekonomi*, 5(03), pp. 107–116.

- Kalyani, P. (2019) 'FDI Directive 2019 and Impact on E-commerce Market a Case Study with Special Reference to Amazon, Walmart-Flipkart and others with New Entry Reliance into the Market', *Journal of Management Engineering and Information Technology*, 6(1), pp. 7–18.
- Kamal, M.B. and Afrin, Z. (2022) 'Women Empowerment Through E-commerce Involvement in Bangladesh During Covid-19 Period'.
- Kanchan, P. (2022) 'Marketing of services: challenges and opportunities with respect to demographic dividend in India.'
- Kannabiran, G. and Narayan, P.C. (2005) 'Deploying Internet banking and e-commerce—case study of a private-sector bank in India', *Information Technology for Development*, 11(4), pp. 363–379. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1002/itdj.20025>.
- Kannan, N., Kumar, A. and Lakshmi, P. (2020) 'A Study on Effectiveness of FDI on Unorganised Retail Sector of India', *ComFin Research*, 8(3), pp. 45–49.
- Kansiime, M.K. *et al.* (2025) 'Pathways and business models for sustainable youth employment in agriculture: A review of research and practice in Africa', *CABI Agriculture and Bioscience*, p. 0045. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1079/ab.2025.0045>.
- Kanyamurwa, J.M. (2016) 'Globalisation, national politics and youth unemployment in Uganda', *economic, political, and social issues*, p. 95.
- Kaur, R. *et al.* (2023) 'Technology led transformation of Indian economy', in *AIP Conference Proceedings*. AIP Publishing.
- Kent, M.L. (2013) 'Using social media dialogically: Public relations role in reviving democracy', *Public Relations Review*, 39(4), pp. 337–345. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2013.07.024>.
- Khirwadkar, A. and Pinkal Chaudhari, U. (2012) 'Information communication technology development (ICTD) for generating employment opportunities for rural youth in India', *Education for Rural Transformation (ERT)*, p. 1.
- Kiani, S.H. and Ahmed, E.M. (2013) 'E-commerce Impact on Iranian Manufacturing SMEs Employment', in. Iran. The International Conference of the Association of Korean Economic Studies.
- Koenig, W., Wigand, R.T. and Beck, R. (2002) *Globalization of E-commerce: Environment and Policy in Germany*. E-Scholarship, University of California.
- 'KPMG' (2025) *Wikipedia*.
- Krongboonjarus, C. (2001) 'Residential broadband Internet services in Thailand'.
- Kumar, A. (2019) *A study of E-commerce as a sustainable model: challenges and perspective*. PhD Thesis. Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University New Delhi.
- Kumar, D.S.V. (2018) 'Rural Development In India—A Way Forward'.

- Kumar, K. (2024) 'Skill Development Programmes Nurture Entrepreneurial Spirit and Enhance Employability Among Youth', *Available at SSRN 5125391* [Preprint].
- Kumar, N. *et al.* (2018) 'Challenges and opportunities of e-commerce in India: Pathway for sustainable e-commerce', *Int. J. Eng. Bus. Manag.*, 2, pp. 13–21.
- Kumar, S. (2024) 'A study on marketing mix of food delivery service by zomato in bangalore and the impact of customer engagement'. ResearchGate.
- Kumar, S. and Tasbir, R.N. (2016) 'Small and Medium Entrepreneurship Development in India: Trends, Opportunities & Challenges'. Available at: <https://ustm.ac.in/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Author-41-58.pdf> (Accessed: 26 June 2025).
- Kwok, C. (2008) 'Development of an intelligent customer relationship decision support system to achieve total customer satisfaction'. Available at: <https://theses.lib.polyu.edu.hk/handle/200/1701> (Accessed: 19 July 2025).
- Lane, C.M. (2011) *A company of one: Insecurity, independence, and the new world of white-collar unemployment*. Cornell University Press.
- Liao, T.W. (2008) 'Enterprise data mining: a review and research directions', *Recent advances in data mining of enterprise data: algorithms and applications*, 6, p. 1.
- López-Bassols, V. (2002) 'ICT skills and employment'.
- Madhukar Sarode and Bagale, G.S. (2019) 'Review of shift from commerce to e-commerce in India', *International Journal of Advance and Innovative Research*, 6(1), pp. 305–309.
- Mahawar, N. *et al.* (2021) 'Challenges in attracting and retaining rural youth in the near future in agriculture', *Curr. Res. Agri. Far*, 2(1), pp. 7–16.
- Maity, P. (2023) 'Entrepreneurship and agribusiness innovation', *Emerging Trends in Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness: An Edited Anthology*, 189.
- Malenya, M.Z. (2017) *Factors That Influence the Growth of E-Commerce in Nairobi Kenya*. PhD Thesis. United States International University-Africa.
- Malhotra, N., Iyer, V.M. and Dave, K. (2022) 'Employability of graduates and postgraduates in respect to retail industry: a study of selected states of North India', *Industrial and Commercial Training*, 54(3), pp. 442–459.
- Maya, M. (2022) 'An Appraisal of Major Trends in Pandemic- India'.
- Mehta, B.S. (2023) 'Changing Nature of Work and the Gig Economy: Theory and Debate', *FIIB Business Review*, 12(3), pp. 227–237.
- Mukherjee, A. (2011) 'Fuelling India's Retail Boom—What Should Be the Right Policy?', in *International Marketing*. Emerald Group Publishing Limited, pp. 57–74.
- Mukherjee, A. and Patel, N. (2005) *FDI in retail sector, India*. Academic Foundation.

Muralidharan, T., Paul, B. and Basole, A. (2021) 'Creating Udyog Sahayak Enterprises Network (USENET) for Employment Generation and Scale-up in the MSME Sector', *Bengaluru: Azim Premji University* [Preprint].

Mweshia, N.M., Koome, P. and Wachira, T.W. (2025) 'Exploring the Potential of Digital Technology in Addressing Youth Unemployment in Africa: A Scoping Review of Literature', *African Multidisciplinary Journal of Research*, 1(1), pp. 489–503.

Nade, P.B. (2021) 'Creating an enabling environment for youth small and medium enterprise start-ups: a comparative study of Tanzania and India', *Eastern Africa Social Science Research Review*, 37(1), pp. 27–48.

Nagar, S. and Ahmad, S.A. (2024) 'The start-up India scheme: fostering entrepreneurship and innovation in the Indian ecosystem', *J. Inform. Educ. Res*, 4(2).

Nahata, M. (2024) *Start-Up India a Boost for Young Entrepreneur*. PhD Thesis. GLOBAL UNIVERSITY.

Nahid, A.I. *et al.* (2023) 'A Conceptual Artistries Multi-Sided Business Model: Upskilling and Nurturing People with A Financial Imbalance in Bangladesh As Fashion-preneurs', *Journal of Information Systems and Digital Technologies*, 5(2), pp. 301–320.

Namjoshi, V. (2018) 'Impact of Digitalization with Special Reference to E-Marketing'.

Narasimha, A. (2017) 'Dharavi Market: Linking Social Enterprise into the E-commerce Industry', *Vision: The Journal of Business Perspective*, 21(2), pp. 225–232. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0972262917701008>.

Nasreen, A. and Purohit, S.K. (2018) 'Working conditions and social security issues of e-commerce delivery workers in India: Understanding from Marxian perspectives', *International Journal of Social Science and Economic Research*, 3(3), pp. 1049–1067.

Nikolof, A. *et al.* (2025) 'Mapping Aboriginal children's social and emotional wellbeing: Development and validation of a new tool in an Aboriginal cohort study', *First Nations Health and Wellbeing - The Lowitja Journal*, 3, p. 100062. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.fnhli.2025.100062>.

Nischala, E. (2024) 'Case Study On Amway's Indian Network Marketing Experience Amway's Indian Network Marketing Experience: A Dream Gone Awry'.

Oláh, J. *et al.* (2018) 'Achieving sustainable e-commerce in environmental, social and economic dimensions by taking possible trade-offs', *Sustainability*, 11(1), p. 89.

Orticio, G.C. (2003) *Towards configuring the Internet for social development in the Philippines*. PhD Thesis. University of the Philippines. Available at: <https://eprints.qut.edu.au/57711/> (Accessed: 19 July 2025).

Othman, I.W. *et al.* (2021) 'The significance of entrepreneurship education literacy in the era of digital transformation: Graduates of the post-pandemic COVID-19 unemployment crisis', *International Journal of Accounting*, 6(37).

Pal, S., Thilaka, N. and Kayal, S. (2022) 'Emerging power in industrialization: empowering India through entrepreneurship', *Journal of Liberty and International Affairs*, 8(3), pp. 99–114.

Pal, S. and Tripathi, N. (2022) 'Digital Market Scenario in India: A Case Study on "Unicorn" Indian Digital Start-Ups', in *Industry 4.0 in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs)*. CRC Press, pp. 155–168.

Pandey, M.V.S.D.M.B. (2016) 'Impact of Digitalization in E-Marketing'. Available at: <https://www.academia.edu/download/51026927/IJRSTV3I5041.pdf> (Accessed: 26 June 2025).

Panigrahi, C.M.A. and Kumar, P. (2014) 'Combating Unemployment: An Indian Perspective', *International Journal of Research in Commerce, IT and Management*, Volume [Preprint], (4).

Podile, V. *et al.* (2020) 'Impact of Digital India on Economic Empowerment of Urban and Rural women', *European Journal of Molecular & Clinical Medicine*, 7(08), p. 2020.

Poorhosseinzadeh, M. *et al.* (2023) 'Direct selling: tackling the challenge of women's inclusion within the base of the pyramid (BOP) labour market during COVID era', *Labour and Industry*, 33(3), pp. 287–307.

Prameswari, N.S. *et al.* (2020) 'Analysis of development e-commerce for accommodate students in developing entrepreneurship mental', *International Journal of Scientific and Technology Research*, 9, pp. 2856–61.

Praveen, K. (2023) 'Gig Workers in Chhattisgarh: Emerging Opportunities in the New Economy', *Central Asian Journal of Innovations on Tourism Management and Finance*, 4(6), pp. 140–148.

Prieur, M. *et al.* (2024) 'Shadowfax: Harnessing Textual Knowledge Base Population', in *Proceedings of the 47th International ACM SIGIR Conference on Research and Development in Information Retrieval. SIGIR 2024: The 47th International ACM SIGIR Conference on Research and Development in Information Retrieval*, Washington DC USA: ACM, pp. 2796–2800.

'QNET' (2025) *Wikipedia*.

QNET | Man City Partners & Sponsors | Mancity.com (2025) *Manchester City FC*. Available at: <https://www.mancity.com/club/partners/qnet> (Accessed: 20 July 2025).

'QNET - Advancing Leadership Excellence in Manitoba' (2025). Available at: <https://qnet.ca/> (Accessed: 20 July 2025).

QNET (Official) - YouTube (2025). Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/user/QNETofficial> (Accessed: 20 July 2025).

Raj, K. and Aithal, P.S. (2018) 'Digitization of India-impact on the BOP sector', *International Journal of Management, Technology, and Social Sciences (IJMTS)*, 3(1), pp. 59–74.

Rajendran, V. and Paul, D. (2020) 'Skilling the Rural Youth of the Northeast of India Through Rural Technologies', *Asia-Pacific Journal of Rural Development*, 30(1–2), pp. 195–202. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1018529120946246>.

Rao, S.S. (2005) 'Bridging digital divide: Efforts in India', *Telematics and informatics*, 22(4), pp. 361–375.

Rehbein, B.K. (2013) 'Rural Livelihoods and e-Commerce: a case study of artisans in Guerrero, Mexico'. Available at: <https://library2.smu.ca/handle/01/25526> (Accessed: 26 June 2025).

Revinova, S. (2019) 'E-commerce in BRICS: similarities and differences', *International Journal of Economic Policy in Emerging Economies*, 12(4), p. 377. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJEPEE.2019.104632>.

Rodrik, D. and Sandhu, R. (2025) 'Servicing Development: Productive Upgrading of Labor-Absorbing Services in Developing Economies', *Global Policy*, 16(2), pp. 306–318. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/1758-5899.70003>.

Saavedra, J.M., Morales, J. and Murrugarra-Llerena, N. (2023) 'SBIR-BYOL: a self-supervised sketch-based image retrieval model', *Neural Computing and Applications*, 35(7), pp. 5395–5408. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00521-022-07978-9>.

Saravanan, R. (2019) *Is traditional retail moving to e-commerce in the field of the fashion industry in India?* Master's Thesis. Instituto Politecnico de Leiria (Portugal). Available at: <https://search.proquest.com/openview/a8dbb8842b0903df412fbc5d53355836/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=2026366&diss=y> (Accessed: 26 June 2025).

Sardar, D.R. (2014) 'Fdi in e-commerce: pros & cons', *International Journal of Management (IJM)*, 5(2), pp. 49–53.

Saurav, S.K. (2025) 'Agripreneurship: A Tool for Revitalising and Unlocking Potentials of Rural Economies in India'.

Sethi, A. (2021) 'One year later: Reflections on the farmers' protest in India', *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, 11(2), pp. 869–876. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1086/716931>.

Shade, L.R. (2002) 'Gender and Community in the Social Construction of the Internet NY: Peter Lang, 2002 (Digital Formation series Vol. 1)'.

Shah, K. (2018) *Implications of Government Intervention in Foreign Direct Investment: The E-commerce Sector in India*. PhD Thesis. Auckland University of Technology.

Shalhoub, Z.K. and Al Qasimi, S.L. (2006) 'The diffusion of e-commerce in developing economies: a resource-based approach', in *The Diffusion of E-commerce in Developing Economies*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

Sharma, G. (2025) 'Leveraging Technology', *Addressing B5G and 6G Network Connectivity Issues in Rural Regions*, p. 279.

Sharma, S.K. and Gupta, J.N.D. (2003) 'Socio-Economic Influences of E-Commerce Adoption', *Journal of Global Information Technology Management*, 6(3), pp. 3–21. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1097198X.2003.10856353>.

Sharma, S.P. and Tandon, N. (2020) 'E-commerce: A Gateway to Prosperity of Rural Youth in India', *Journal of Business Thought*, pp. 17–27.

Sharma, U. and Bhadoria, G. (2024) 'Legal Challenges and Regulations for E-Commerce Companies', *Issue 3 Int'l JL Mgmt. & Human.*, 7, p. 1314.

Sharma, V. (2024) 'Impact of COVID-19 on Labor Market Participation: A Case Study of Jammu City, India', *Global Economics Science*, pp. 64–84.

Shi, J. *et al.* (2024) 'Graduates' Entrepreneurial Intention in a Developing Country: The Influence of social media and E-commerce Adoption (SMEA) and its Antecedents', *Information Development*, 40(1), pp. 20–35.

Siddiqui, S. and Singh, R. (2018) 'Digitalization and E-Commerce in India: An Employment Generation Initiative', *Intl. J. Adv. Res. Comm & Mgmt*, 4(2), pp. 1–11.

Singh, L., and Kadam, A.R. (2024) *Indian economy-I*. Navi International Book Publication house.

Singh, S. (2011) 'Export Trade Performance of Indian Economy during and Following the Global Financial Crisis.', *Journal of Global Analysis*, 2(2).

Singh, T., Jayashankar, J.V. and Singh, J. (2001) 'E-Commerce in the US and Europe—Is Europe Ready to Compete?', *Business Horizons*, 44(2), pp. 6–6.

Singh, U.S. and Baghel, S.S. (2021) 'Entrepreneurship in Small Scale Industries: New prospects and opportunities amidst Covid-19 Pandemic.', *Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry*, 12(9).

Sinha, S. (2018) 'Gender Digital Divide in India: Impacting Women's Participation in the Labour Market', in Nilerd (ed.) *Reflecting on India's Development*. Singapore: Springer Singapore, pp. 293–310. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-1414-8_14.

Som, S. *et al.* (2018) 'Attracting and retaining youth in agriculture: challenges and prospects', *Journal of Community Mobilization and Sustainable Development*, 13(3), pp. 385–395.

Soundarya, N.P. and Kumar, T. (2025a) 'Factors Contributing to Unemployment', *Information Systems for Intelligent Systems: Proceedings of ISBM 2024, Volume 5*, 1255, p. 355.

Soundarya, N.P. and Kumar, T. (2025b) 'Factors Contributing to Unemployment for Slums in India', in A. Iglesias *et al.* (eds) *Information Systems for Intelligent Systems*. Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore (Lecture Notes in Networks and Systems), pp. 355–366. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-96-1747-0_29.

Sovbetov, Y. (2018) 'Impact of Digital Economy on Female Employment: Evidence from Turkey', *International Economic Journal*, 32(2), pp. 256–270. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10168737.2018.1478868>.

Stander, A.M. (2015) *Investigating the use of e-commerce to empower South African women*. PhD Thesis. North-West University (South Africa), Potchefstroom Campus.

Sukasame, N., Sebor, T.C. and Mohedano-Suanes, A. (2008) 'E-commerce entrepreneurship as a national priority: the case of Thailand', *The Service Industries Journal*, 28(7), pp. 989–1001. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/02642060701861357>.

Tan, Z. and Ouyang, W. (2002) 'Global and national factors affecting e-commerce diffusion in China'.

Tan, Z.A. and Ouyang, W. (2003) 'Globalization and e-commerce I: Factors affecting e-commerce diffusion in China', *Communications of the Association for Information Systems*, 10(1), p. 2.

Thumakunta, N. (2024) 'Skill-based Employment Opportunities Versus Youth Aspirations in Logistics Sector in Hyderabad: Findings of a Market Study', *Journal of Development Policy and Practice*, p. 24551333241285967. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/24551333241285967>.

Tsukamoto, T. and Dua, M.K. (2021) 'E-Commerce in India and Japan'. Available at: https://www.bookcaze.com/products/pdf_free/29058.pdf (Accessed: 26 June 2025).

Ünver, Ş. and Alkan, Ö. (2021) 'Determinants of e-commerce use at different educational levels: empirical evidence from Turkey e-commerce use at different educational levels', *International Journal of Advanced Computer Science and Applications*, 12(3).

Van Lange Paul, Liebrand, W.B. and Wilke Henk (2015) 'Introduction and literature review', *Social dilemmas*, pp. 3–28.

Vijayan, A. (2019) 'Digital India-A roadmap to sustainability', *International Journal of Innovative Technology and Exploring Engineering*, 8(5), pp. 571–576.

Walters, G.J. (2001) 'Information highway policy, e-commerce and work', *E-commerce vs. e-commons: Communications in the public interest*, pp. 69–94.

Wang, L., Lyu, S. and Zhou, L. (2025) 'Rural e-commerce and happiness: evidence from China', *Electronic Commerce Research* [Preprint]. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10660-025-09991-1>.

Wang, Y. *et al.* (2022) 'How supportive leadership promotes employee innovation under uncertainty: evidence from Chinese E-commerce industry', *Sustainability*, 14(12), p. 7491.

Wang, Y. and Wu, Y. (2025) 'Digital economy, rural e-commerce development, and farmers' employment quality', *Sustainability*, 17(7), p. 2949.

Wankhede, S.G. (2023) 'Impact of E-commerce in Indian Economy'.

Yadav, A. (2022) 'Soft skills training for success of sales in retail', *ACADEMICIA: An International Multidisciplinary Research Journal*, 12(5), pp. 116–124.

Yadav, Dr.S. (2021) *Changing Scenario of Business and Management*. Book Rivers.

Yadav, M. (2020) 'Covid-19 and its effects on India's Labour Market'. Available at: <http://akademos.in/2021/07/292-319.pdf> (Accessed: 26 June 2025).

Yadav, U.S. *et al.* (2023) 'Entrepreneurship in India's handicraft industry with the support of digital technology and innovation during natural calamities.

Yin, Z.H. and Choi, C.H. (2022) 'Does e-commerce narrow the urban–rural income gap? Evidence from Chinese provinces', *Internet Research*, 32(4), pp. 1427–1452.

Yoganandan, G. (2024) 'Empowering India's future: the role of vocational education, skill development, and entrepreneurship in shaping a self-reliant nation under Atmanirbhar Bharat'.

Zatonatska, T. and Fedirko, O. (2019) 'Modeling of the E-Commerce Impact on the Employment in EU', in *2019 IEEE International Conference on Advanced Trends in Information Theory (ATIT)*. IEEE, pp. 304–308. Available at: <https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/abstract/document/9030427/> (Accessed: 26 June 2025).

Zhang, H. *et al.* (2025) 'E-commerce development, poverty reduction and income growth in rural China', *Journal of Strategy and Management*, 18(1), pp. 148–176.

Zhang, H., Sun, X. and Ding, Z. (2023) 'The interplay of gender, motherhood, and the digital economy in China: exploring the experiences of urban mothers in WeChat businesses', *The Journal of Chinese Sociology*, 10(1), p. 17. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40711-023-00194-5>.

Zhang, L. *et al.* (2024) 'Identifying the characteristics of rural regions in China where e-commerce can effectively drive rural revitalisation', *International Journal of Services and Standards*, 14(3), pp. 240–267. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJSS.2024.143431>.

Zolotina, O., Kosareva, A. and Chernykh, E. (2023) 'Approaches to the development of platform employment in the BRICS countries', *BRICS Journal of Economics*, 4(3), pp. 347–368.

ANNEXURES

Annexure I- Questionnaire

Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire is a part of a Ph.D. dissertation which is being undertaken on the topic “E-Commerce & Direct Selling: A big Solution for Under-employment & Unemployment”. Your responses shall be used only for academic purposes. We thank you sincerely in advance for your valued participation.

1. Please indicate your gender

- (a) Female
- (b) Male
- (c) Others

2. Please indicate your age (in years)

- (a) 18-24
- (b) 25-30
- (c) 31 -35
- (d) 36-45
- (e) 45 & above

3. Education Level

- (a) Intermediate
- (b) Graduate
- (c) Postgraduate
- (d) Diploma
- (e) Others

4. Experience (In years)

- (a) 1-3
- (b) 3-5

5. Which Platform are you working on :

- (a) Zomato
- (b) Urban company
- (c) Ola
- (d) Rapido
- (e) Swiggy

Please give your response regarding Workplace Context

SL.NO	Workplace Context	SA	A	N	D	SD
WC1	The workplace environment is conducive to performing my tasks effectively.					

WC2	There is clear communication between gig workers and clients/employers.					
WC3	I receive adequate support from my clients/employers to meet my work requirements.					
WC4.	The workplace provides opportunities for professional growth and development.					
WC5.	The workplace promotes a healthy work-life balance.					

Please give your response regarding the Nature of the Platform

SLNO	Nature of Platform	SA	A	N	D	SD
NPF1.	The platform I use offers a user-friendly interface.					
NPF2.	The platform provides clear guidelines and instructions for completing tasks.					
NPF3.	The platform offers fair and transparent compensation for the work performed.					

Please give your response regarding Autonomy

SLNO	Autonomy	SA	A	N	D	SD
ATNM1.	My platform allows me to perform the work exactly how I want and judge appropriately					
ATNM2.	I am confident about my skills and capabilities to do the work performed at my platform.					
ATNM3.	My Platform enables me to work from anywhere that I want, without any impact on the quality of the work					

ATNM4.	I can decide on my own how to go about doing the work					
ATNM5.	My Platform provides appropriate time to complete the tasks with a good quality.					

Please give your response regarding Dignity

SI.NO	Dignity	SA	A	N	D	SD
DG1.	I feel a sense of pride working at my platform					
DG2.	I feel valued and respected by job requesters from Platform					
DG3.	The work performed in the Platform environment brings a sense of belonging to a better cause					

Please give your response regarding competence.

SI.NO	Competence	SA	A	N	D	SD
COMP1.	My gig work requires a high level of specialized skills and knowledge.					
COMP2	I feel confident in my ability to perform the tasks required in my gig work					
COMP3	I have access to resources and training opportunities to enhance my skills					
COMP4	The gig work I engage in challenges me to further develop my abilities.					
COMP5	I receive recognition and appreciation for my competence in the gig work I perform					

Please give your response regarding **RELATEDNESS**

SLNO	RELATEDNESS	SA	A	N	D	SD
RLTD1	I have the opportunity to positively influence people's lives through Platform work					
RLTD2	I feel that my participation at Platform contributes to the changes in how people work and create value					
RLTD3	This Platform fulfills my need to participate in something meaningful for life					
RLTD4	The job activities in my Platform environment are meaningful to me					
RLTD5	It provides me alternatives to contribute to something towards society					

Please give your response regarding **Intrinsic Motivation**

SLNO	Intrinsic Motivation	SA	A	N	D	SD
IM1	I find personal satisfaction and enjoyment in the gig work I perform.					
IM2	I am motivated by the sense of accomplishment derived from completing tasks.					
IM3	The gig work aligns with my personal values and interests.					
IM4	I feel a sense of purpose and fulfillment in the gig work I engage in.					
IM5	I am enthusiastic and passionate about the gig work I do.					

Please give your response regarding Algorithmic Management Context

SL.NO	Algorithmic Management Context	SA	A	N	D	SD
AM1.	This app is transparent in allotting job					
AM2	This app offers flexibility in choosing tasks					
AM3	This app shares valuable data with you					
AM4	This app does not exploit my skills					

Annexure II:

QNET India: A Case Study in E-Commerce-Based Direct Selling and Its Employment Dynamics

This case study looks at QNET India, a direct-selling company that works through its franchisee, Vihaan Direct Selling (India) Pvt. Ltd., and uses an e-commerce-based model. It looks at QNET's products, its network of distributors, the rules it has to follow, and how it helps young people find jobs. QNET is in the middle of wellness retail and entrepreneurship. It offers e-commerce tools and ways to make money through commissions. Some of the goals are to look at how well the business uses digital platforms, how they affect income generation and reducing underemployment, and to look at the controversies and how the government has responded. The results show that QNET gives some entrepreneurs the freedom to make money in different ways, but legal issues like claims of pyramid schemes show that there are risks to the safety of distributors and consumers. This study looks at both the potential for change and the need for good governance. It ends with suggestions for ethical growth, following the rules, and providing value for all stakeholders (Belsare, 2019).

Purpose

The goal of this case study is to fully assess QNET India's direct selling model that uses e-commerce, with a focus on its social and economic effects. In particular, it will look at how QNET uses digital platforms to help its Independent Distributors (IDs) reach more customers, make more sales, and keep more distributors, especially young people. The study also wants to find out if QNET's structure provides a flexible, low-cost way for entrepreneurs to start their own businesses that effectively deals with the problems of educated but underutilised people who are underemployed or unemployed (Graham and Hanna, 2011). The study will look at whether QNET IDs have the same level of independence, self-efficacy, and ability to make money as gig workers do. The study will also look closely at QNET's compliance with regulations, the authenticity of its products, and the openness of its business to see how these things affect consumer trust and market legitimacy in India. The goal is to provide evidence-

based information about whether e-commerce direct selling can be a scalable, inclusive, and responsible way to make money in developing countries by doing this (Shade, 2002).

Implications

Combining direct selling and e-commerce is a great way to help India deal with its high levels of unemployment and underemployment. The e-commerce ecosystem has been a major source of jobs in the past, employing not only e-tail workers but also people in related fields like logistics, warehousing, IT, and marketing (KPMG). On average, every online store creates nine jobs, including skilled and unskilled workers. This shows how the industry affects the job market as a whole ('KPMG', 2025).

Direct selling adds to this by making it possible to start a business with little money and a lot of flexibility. As a major non-store format, it has helped more than five million people, 60% of whom are women, find work for themselves across all income levels (KPMG). Digital platforms and person-to-person interaction work well together in two ways: e-commerce makes it easier to get to the market and run a business, and direct selling keeps trust and personalisation ('KPMG', 2025).

This mixed model is important because it fits with developmental goals. It helps fix problems in the job market by giving "micro-entrepreneurs," especially young people and women, the freedom to make their own money and improve their skills. Studies say that India's e-commerce boom will create millions of new jobs, especially in management, marketing, logistics, and customer service. So, this model encourages digital literacy, entrepreneurship, and everyone to take part in the economy (Liao, 2008).

The model's qualitative effects, such as building community, mental resilience, and confidence, should not be ignored, even though it creates more jobs. Direct e-commerce jobs that are like gigs help people get ready for the future and move up in society.

But there aren't many full studies yet. We need strong empirical research to figure out how the model affects underemployment, long-term earnings, and skill development. We also need to look into how clear the rules are, especially in direct selling.

It is very important for policymakers and business leaders to do these kinds of studies. Sound empirical evidence will help shape the rules and programs that make digital direct selling growth possible in a way that is ethical, scalable, and open to everyone. Without careful evaluation, we might miss important gaps and make investments that aren't focused. We can

only use direct selling and e-commerce as powerful tools for national employment and economic fairness if we study them in depth.

Introduction

India's large number of young people is both an economic opportunity and a problem for the job market. Every year, hundreds of thousands of young people enter the job market, but there aren't enough formal jobs to go around. This leads to ongoing problems with unemployment and underemployment. Data on employment show that while unemployment (when people actively look for work but can't find it) is still a big problem, underemployment (when people take low-paying or part-time jobs that don't fully use their skills) is just as bad. This lack of economic activity hurts Indian youth's productivity, morale, and long-term growth prospects (Aun, 2020).

In response, direct selling and gig economy models that are based on e-commerce have come up as good solutions. E-commerce has become a big source of jobs in India. According to a KPMG report, each online store creates about nine jobs, including both direct and indirect ones like logistics, warehousing, and IT support (RIS). A new study by the Pahle India Foundation says that online sellers have created about 15.8 million jobs, with 3.5 million of those jobs going to women. This large number of new jobs in many sectors shows that digital commerce is more than just a retail trend; it's an employment engine for many sectors ('KPMG', 2025).

Direct selling has a lot of potential, but it is more focused than e-commerce. Direct selling is different from regular retail because it uses independent distributors to sell products directly to customers, cutting out the costs of running a store. When e-commerce platforms power this model, it gets a lot of great benefits, like low start-up costs, flexible hours, and the ability to reach local markets. A direct selling ecosystem in India has helped millions of entrepreneurs, mostly women and people who live in rural areas, by giving them more power and opportunities to participate in the economy (Saavedra, Morales and Murrugarra-Llerena, 2023).

The combination of e-commerce and direct selling creates a hybrid model that can help with job problems in a big way. It combines gig-style freedom, where people can choose their own schedules and locations, with digital infrastructure that lets them run their business, deal with customers, and make sales online. This change is necessary to move from underemployment,

where educated young people and skilled workers take jobs that are below their level of education, to entrepreneurial engagement.

For young people who are underemployed, especially those with a college degree but few job options, direct selling with e-commerce can help them regain control over their finances and their mental health. They become more competitive and confident when they learn how to do digital marketing, analytics, and customer relationship management. It also helps people be more financially stable than people who do low-wage or irregular informal work.

This hybrid model helps with mental and spiritual health as well as economic outcomes. Gig and micro-entrepreneurship jobs help people feel like they can do things, have a purpose, and belong to a community—things that are often missing in unstable jobs. These soft-growth dimensions are very important for overall growth and fit with human-centred growth models.

QNET

QNET India, run by Vihaan Direct Selling (India) Pvt. Ltd., is an example of a hybrid business model that uses e-commerce infrastructure to support low-capital direct-to-consumer (D2C) and direct-to-distributor (D2D) entrepreneurship. QNET India, which opened in 1998, offers a wide range of products and services, including health supplements, personal care items, home and living goods, watches, jewellery, and lifestyle services. All of these are only available through an online store and a network of Independent Distributors (IDs) ('QNET', 2025). This model helps fix India's structural unemployment and underemployment by offering flexible, commission-based ways to make money without the costs of running a regular store. However, the model's implementation and lack of clear rules have come under scrutiny from time to time. This case study looks at QNET's business model, how it affects youth employment and women's empowerment, the legal and moral problems it has faced, and offers suggestions for long-term, inclusive growth (*QNET | Man City Partners & Sponsors | Mancity.com*, 2025).



Figure A.13: Services offered by QNET ('QNET - Advancing Leadership Excellence in Manitoba', 2025).

Vijay Eswaran and Joseph Bismarck started QNET in Hong Kong in 1998. Early on, the company set out on an ambitious plan to grow internationally. By the mid-2000s, it was operating in Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and the CIS region. Vihaan Direct Selling (India) Pvt. Ltd., which is a sister company, was set up in 2011 under the Companies Act, 1956, and is QNET's only sub-franchisee in India. Vihaan follows all of the rules and regulations set by India's Ministry of Consumer Affairs in 2016. The company operates within a formalised legal and business framework (Sharma and Bhadoria, 2024).

QNET India has a wide range of products for sale through its own e-commerce store. These include health supplements, personal care items, home care items, beauty care items, and luxury items like watches and jewellery. Independent Distributors (IDs) are the only people who can sell and promote products. They sign up with Vihaan and get access to an online e-store; there are no physical stores involved (Qbuzz). This structure combines the traditional, face-to-face, relationship-based direct selling model with digital scalability. This makes it a good fit for India's growing internet use and mobile-first distribution model (Canals-Cerda, 2006).

QNET calls itself a wellness and lifestyle brand that helps entrepreneurs through its RYTHM philosophy, which stands for "Raise Yourself to Help Mankind." Over the past 20 years, the company has worked to build a global community of micro entrepreneurs based on core values

like honesty, service, sustainability, and leadership. QNET says it has built a network of more than one million customers and distributors in India alone, but there isn't much independent data to back this up ('QNET', 2025).

Even though QNET has big plans, its hybrid model has come under fire. Critics often say that its multi-level compensation structure is like a pyramid scheme because it depends more on getting new distributors than on selling products. The company, on the other hand, defends its legitimacy by saying in public advisories that it only pays commissions on confirmed product sales and that its prices range from INR 1,485 to INR 315,300. It also makes it clear that it does not promise quick income (Qbuzz). In early 2025, QNET won a favourable ruling when the National Company Law Tribunal threw out claims that Vihaan was bankrupt. The company also got a court order to take down false information that had been published in the media (Liao, 2008).

India's direct-selling industry has grown a lot, with a CAGR of 8.4% from 2013 to 2017 and revenues going from INR 7,472 crore to INR 10,324 crore. About 5 million people work in this industry, and more than half of them are women (Indhumathi, 2021). QNET was one of the first companies in Asia's direct-selling market to use e-commerce. It is now in a strategic position in a market that is changing and combining digital technology, flexible work models, and entrepreneurial potential (Qbuzz).

Significance

Conducting rigorous studies on e-commerce-enabled direct selling, like QNET India carries profound importance for India's socio-economic development:

1. Tackling Unemployment and Underemployment

India's economy has been growing steadily, but the job market is still struggling with structural unemployment and widespread underemployment, especially among educated young people. According to official data from MoSPI (2024), about 28% of the workforce is underemployed, meaning they are doing jobs that are below their skill level. The gig economy in India, on the other hand, had more than 6 million platform workers by 2022 and is expected to have 10 million by 2024. Looking at models like QNET can help find scalable, low-barrier ways to get people involved in productive activities that close the gap between ability and opportunity (Kanyamurwa, 2016).

2. Validating Inclusive, Flexible Entrepreneurship

Evidence shows that each e-commerce venture can generate up to nine additional jobs across logistics, warehousing, and digital services. This model, when used with direct selling, lets women, young people in rural areas, and people who aren't working full-time start online micro-businesses with very little money. By 2025, direct selling alone is expected to give about 20 million Indians the chance to start their own businesses. This study looks at effective frameworks for generating income and wealth in a way that is respectful and decentralized (Sinha, 2018).

3. Strengthening Skill Development and Digital Integration

The digital economy needs people who know how to do things like e-commerce, social media marketing, and managing customers online. Since e-commerce adoption is strongly linked to more people working around the world, looking at real-world examples like QNET helps us figure out how to build capacity and make sure that Skill India's goals match what the market actually needs (Orticio, 2003).

4. Guiding Policy and Regulatory Design

The new Consumer Protection (Direct Selling) Rules, 2021, are a step forward, but there are still gaps in enforcement. This study can suggest ongoing oversight mechanisms, such as clear earnings disclosure, digital quality assurance, and compliance training, to make sure that ethical practices are followed and consumers are protected (Bhanver and Bhanver, 2017).

5. Charting a Sustainable Future for India's Digital Economy

India's e-commerce market is anticipated to reach \$200 billion by 2027. Hybrid direct-selling models can turn it into a driver of fair growth. It is very important to look into scalability, income equality, skill pathways, and ethical governance. If you don't use strategies based on evidence, you could end up making the same mistakes in the informal sector and putting workers at risk (Abbas, 2018).

A. QNET Services: Low-Capital Entry for Entrepreneurship

One of QNET India's most compelling attributes lies in its ability to empower entrepreneurship by eradicating the typical barriers associated with launching a business. QNET is different from traditional franchises or D2C channels like Reliance Digital or Samsung dealers because they need a lot of money to buy inventory, store it, and hire staff. QNET lets regular people start their own business with very little money.

1. Minimal Start-up Costs

There is no registration fee to become a QNET Independent Distributor (ID). This gives you digital access to QNET's exclusive e-commerce portal and sample products. This means you don't have to keep track of physical inventory or rent space for a store. QNET's quick onboarding shows that they want to make it easier for people to get started, so that students, stay-at-home parents, and unemployed young people can start making money right away (Asari *et al.*, 2023).

2. Infrastructure-Free Operations

Traditional franchises need physical locations, staff management, and extra costs for logistics. QNET doesn't have to deal with this at all because it uses a D2D and D2C model powered by digital shopfronts. Distributors share personalised links and social media posts to get in touch with customers. QNET takes care of processing orders, fulfilling them, and delivering them. This infrastructure-light approach enables agile scale-up without capital risk (Shade, 2002).

3. Flexible, Gig-like Work

QNET's model is like the freedom and independence of the gig economy. Distributors have more freedom than people who work in retail or for a salary because they can choose when and how they sell. This flexibility works well for people who are going to school, taking care of someone, or working part-time. QNET says that success is not guaranteed and that it is "not a get-rich-quick scheme" that requires commitment, patience, and strategic effort. However, this freedom is what makes it so appealing (Chen, Ruan and Wang, 2023).

4. Learning & Skill-building

The model encourages distributors to learn important business skills like digital marketing, customer engagement, and managing online sales with little time investment at the start. The RYTHM academy and community networks offer training, e-learning modules, and mentorship to people who want to learn more about QNET. These new skills fit with India's bigger goals for digital literacy and start-ups (Brown, Phillips, and Ali, 2024).

5. Inclusive Opportunity

The low-capital, technology-enabled model lets more women, rural youth, and economically disadvantaged groups take part. With 40–60% of IDs being women, QNET supports gender-inclusive entrepreneurship. It lets people who don't have traditional collateral or live in cities start small businesses from home, which helps them become financially independent and helps the local economy grow (Asavatitanonta, 2003).

6. Scalability without Risk

Success on the platform depends on product sales and team-building through step commissions. You don't have to put a lot of money into stocks. A small amount of business in the first year—

70–80 BV per customer—can lead to steep commissions once the ID sponsors two active distributors who each bring in 3,000 BV a month (How to Start a QNET Business). This performance-based remuneration mirrors gig models while reducing inventory risk (Rajendran and Paul, 2020).

B. No Stock, No Office, No Inventory

QNET India's cloud-based e-commerce portal is one of the company's most cutting-edge and forward-thinking features. It lets Independent Distributors (IDs) run their businesses without having to pay for inventory or office space. This method not only makes it much easier for new businesses to get started, but it also makes QNET a model for digital-enabled entrepreneurship in India that looks to the future.

1. Cloud-Based Business Platform

QNET's own e-store, which is run through the Virtual Office dashboard, lets IDs sell a wide range of physical goods and digital services online without having to keep any stock. QNET owns and centrally manages all of its inventory, which includes health supplements, beauty products, lifestyle services, and vacation packages. This makes it easier for small businesses to deal with common logistical problems like shipping, warehousing, and storage, or the risk of goods going bad. The result is a sales system that works without friction and can grow with India's booming e-commerce infrastructure ('QNET', 2025).

2. D2D and D2C Channel Synergy

QNET's model uses both Direct-to-Distributor (D2D) and Direct-to-Consumer (D2C) channels. IDs can build a personal sales network by signing up new partners and then using their e-store link to reach end customers. This hybrid structure gives distributors a one-of-a-kind chance: they can not only sell products, but also build long-term partnerships with customers that could last for generations. As a result, each distributor becomes the owner of a small franchise (*QNET (Official) - YouTube*, 2025).

3. Logistics-Free Retail Model

Traditional retail models need money to build stores, buy inventory, and pay for things like rent and staff on an ongoing basis. QNET gets rid of all of these. Vihaan Direct Selling takes care of operations, delivery, and customer service. IDs are only about marketing, building networks, and keeping customers happy. This retail model without logistics is similar to the gig economy, where earnings are based on effort rather than capital investment (Yadav, 2022).

4. Digital Infrastructure and Training

QNET helps distributors learn about digital marketing, planning their pay, using social media, live presentation tools, and following the rules. This kind of skill-building is very important because IDs learn how to manage their online presence, interact with customers, and connect their network through e-commerce tools, all without having to know how to manage inventory. This digital literacy gives people a way to get into India's fast-growing online economy (Kwok, 2008).

5. Resilience in Crisis Contexts

The COVID-19 pandemic made it clear how important it is for businesses to be able to work without contact and be flexible. QNET's cloud-based, inventory-free operations allowed IDs to keep working during lockdowns by using social media, messaging apps, and e-stores to fill orders. This was different from traditional shopfronts, which had to close. This flexibility shows how resilient no-inventory business models are in India's unpredictable environments (Javed, 2020).

6. Pathway to Sustainable Entrepreneurship

QNET lets people, including students, stay-at-home moms, and rural youth, start businesses with almost no money and run them from home by getting rid of stock and office space needs. This makes entrepreneurship more open to everyone, even those who don't have formal capital or urban infrastructure. The compensatory model, which is based on product sales and network performance, is similar to gig economy ideas, but it offers a way to make money instead of just working gigs (Muralidharan, Paul and Basole, 2021).

C. Global Product Access

One of the best things about QNET's direct selling model, which is based on e-commerce, is that it lets people buy and sell a huge range of products and services from all over the world through a single online platform. This model of aggregation is an example of forward-thinking in retail and distribution. It lets Independent Distributors (IDs) in India offer consumers international brands and high-quality goods without having to have physical stock or stores.

1. Diverse Range of Physical Products

Through QNET's Virtual Office, IDs can sell high-end items like Swiss-made watches, gold and diamond jewellery, tanzanite and pearl accessories, and high-end home goods like ORITSU crockery and Sharp air purifiers. Centralised logistics often ship these rare items from other countries when they are needed. This means that Indian customers can buy luxury goods

without having to pay for the costs of importers, and IDs can make money that is similar to what traditional retailers make (Tsukamoto and Dua, 2021).

2. Health, Beauty, and Wellness Products

Nutriplus Bone Health and other products in QNET's health and wellness line are scientifically proven supplements that are made to strengthen bones using important vitamins and minerals from around the world. IDs benefit from selling products that combine modern formulations with Ayurvedic philosophies, which is a great match for e-commerce and direct selling. This is because India is becoming more interested in both global standards and traditional wellness (Banerjee and Banerjee, 2017).

3. Lifestyle and Vacation Offerings

QNET works with international service providers to offer more than just physical goods. They also offer digital services, gym and wellness memberships, and vacation packages. The platform stands out because it offers vacation packages and memberships that meet international standards. You can book all of these through an ID's online store. This variety increases the potential for income and positions IDs as lifestyle consultants, which makes the direct-selling model seem more valuable ('QNET', 2025).

4. Value of Aggregation

This centralised, cloud-based collection gives IDs the power to make curated portfolios that meet the needs of each customer. The digital shopfront does away with the need for inventory while still offering a wide range of high-quality products. Customers get a variety of options, good quality, and convenience, while IDs make money over and over again. This kind of digital curation fits with current retail trends and takes advantage of the fact that more and more people in India are getting smartphones ('QNET', 2025).

D. Flexible, Scalable Business Model

QNET India's direct selling platform, which is powered by e-commerce, is a visionary model that gives thousands of ambitious business owners in India the tools they need to succeed. QNET offers a scalable opportunity for people from all walks of life by combining the flexibility of gig work with a multi-level distribution system. This doesn't require a lot of money or infrastructure ('QNET,' 2025).

- **Autonomy and Micro-Entrepreneurship**

The idea of independent entrepreneurship is at the core of QNET's model. IDs set their own hours, sales strategies, and ways to reach out to customers, just like gig workers do on ride-

sharing or food delivery platforms. But unlike many gig-economy jobs, QNET IDs can start small businesses that make money and have direct relationships with customers, which gives them the chance to grow over time. QNET itself says that teaching people how to be entrepreneurs is more important to its business philosophy than getting people to passively participate (Farooq *et al.*, 2019).

- **Scalable Multi-Level Growth**

The multi-level structure lets exceptional IDs hire and train new partners, and they can make money from both their own sales and the growth of their partners' networks. This ability to grow makes leaders want to buy their teams training, coaching, and tools. QNET helps this progress by offering structured training programs and events for people from all over the world. The Fingreen financial literacy program, which has won awards for its long-term business training, shows that the company is dedicated to scaled leadership and financial empowerment ('QNET,' 2025).

- **Technological Enablement**

QNET's ability to grow depends on digital tools. To improve the usability and reliability of its e-commerce infrastructure and mobile apps, the company has teamed up with tech companies like Microsoft. IDs can use their smartphones to access dashboards that show performance metrics, sales trends, and personalised marketing content. This digital backbone makes every seller a data-driven business owner who can work from anywhere and connect with customers more effectively ('KPMG,' 2025).

- **Ethical Standards and Sustainability**

QNET says that its business model is ethical and sustainable. It often publishes articles that explain how its practices are different from pyramid schemes. QNET's environmental policies, like their promise to use FSC-certified packaging and get rid of single-use plastics, also show that they care about social responsibility and the future of the planet. These values show that the company is ethical and trustworthy to both socially conscious consumers and IDs (Chen, Ruan and Wang, 2023).

- **Inclusive Job Creation in Emerging Economies**

This model is flexible and can grow, so young graduates, women, and people from rural areas can access business opportunities from anywhere. IDs can make a difference in the economy by creating income streams with little start-up capital. The COVID-19 pandemic and other crises showed how this model can help people make a living when formal jobs are hard to find (Sharma, 2024).

E. Comparison of QNET vs other similar services

Presented below is a comparison between QNET, a direct selling platform services and other traditional services operating in the same sectors:

I.Comparison Between Amazon and QNET: Understanding Divergent E-Commerce and Direct Selling Models

The image in figure 2 compares Amazon, a huge global e-commerce company, with QNET, a well-known direct selling company, to show the main differences in how they work and how they are set up. Amazon is a regular e-commerce site where sellers sell things directly to customers. The company makes most of its money from product or affiliate sales. On the other hand, QNET lets people earn money through both direct sales and team growth, making it more like a business ('QNET', 2025).

Feature	Amazon	QNET
Business Model	E-commerce marketplace	Direct selling (MLM)
Income Source	Product/affiliate sales	Product & network sales
Recruitment	Not required	Optional, part of growth
Startup Cost	Low to Medium	Moderate (purchase required)
Customer Base	Open to public	Through IR network
Product Type	Millions of items	Branded niche products
Logistics	In-house (Amazon FBA)	Outsourced logistics
Passive Income	Possible via affiliates	Yes via downline sales
Mentorship	None built-in	Core part of IR model
Legal Reputation	Generally strong	Mixed – country-specific scrutiny

Figure A.14: Comparison of QNET vs other Online Selling Business (Amazon/Flipkart).

In QNET, recruiting is optional, but it's necessary for people who want to make more money by building a network. Amazon, on the other hand, only lists products and doesn't rely on recruitment. Amazon has low to medium start-up costs, mostly for inventory and listing fees. QNET, on the other hand, requires a moderate initial purchase that serves as both product acquisition and business activation.

Amazon's customer service is different from QNET's because Amazon has a public-facing model that is open to all buyers, while QNET uses its Independent Representative (IR) network. Amazon has a huge selection of products, while QNET focusses on high-end niche items like health, lifestyle, and luxury goods.

Amazon handles logistics through its Fulfilment by Amazon (FBA) system, while QNET hires other companies to do this work, which lowers costs for distributors. Both platforms can help you make passive income, but QNET does this better by using downline sales, which focus on building wealth over time. One important difference between QNET and Amazon's seller experience is that QNET includes mentorship.

Lastly, Amazon has a generally good reputation when it comes to the law. QNET is legal in many places, but its reputation is mixed because different countries have different levels of regulatory scrutiny. But if done ethically, QNET is a scalable, low-capital way to start a business, especially in developing countries.

II. Employment, Economy & Empowerment Matrix: Direct Selling vs. Other Sectors

The comparison table in figure 3 shows how five major employment sectors affect job creation, the economy, and people's ability to make decisions in a variety of ways. The Direct Selling model, which QNET is a good example of, stands out as being especially inclusive and empowering, especially in India.

It is very easy to get into QNET, so people of all ages and educational backgrounds can join. This is not the case in the IT sector, where you need technical skills. In direct selling, the speed at which jobs are created is scalable and decentralised, which makes it more flexible than manufacturing or the gig economy, which tend to be unstable or slow to grow.

One of QNET's best features is that it can reach people in rural areas, especially in India's Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities, where the job market isn't very good. The model also does well with flexible income options, giving people who work part-time the chance to make money, which is great for stay-at-home parents, students, and even retirees. On the other hand, fields like IT or manufacturing have strict hiring rules or don't hire unskilled workers very often.

QNET is important because it deals with both unemployment and underemployment. It does this by providing a low-capital income solution that works with existing low-paying jobs. This is very different from the gig economy, which is still based on transactions and doesn't offer job security.

Factor / Aspect	Direct Selling	IT Sector	Manufacturing	Retail	Gig Economy
Entry Barrier	Very Low – anyone can join	High – requires education/technical skills	Medium – needs training or vocational skills	Low to Medium – varies by role	Low – but competitive
Job Creation Speed	High – scalable & decentralized	Moderate – dependent on business growth	Slow to Moderate	High in urban zones	Millions globally, but unstable
Rural Penetration	Very Strong – growing reach in Tier 2/3 cities	Very Low	Moderate	Limited	Very Low
Part-time/Flexible Income	Core advantage – ideal for homemakers/students	Rare	Rare	Often rigid shifts	Unpredictable and inconsistent
Unemployment Solution	Effective alternative income	Not accessible for the under/unskilled	Seasonal/contractual	Short-term fix, less sustainable	Temporary & uncertain
Underemployment Solution	Yes – can supplement low incomes easily	No	Minimal	Limited	Rare – based on gig volume
Economic Contribution	\$200+ Billion globally; India: INR 19,020 Cr FY22	\$5T+ globally; India ~\$200B	Trillions globally; backbone of GDP	\$26T global industry	\$500B+ globally
Asset Creation Potential	High (passive income + inheritance)	Medium—stocks/ESOPs	Low to medium (pensions or savings)	Low—mostly wages	Very low—transactional earnings
Mental & Emotional Benefits	High—community, purpose, recognition	Medium—high pressure, burnout risk	Low—repetitive tasks, less recognition	Low to medium	Low—loneliness, stress, no purpose
Spiritual & Value Integration	Strong—service, gratitude, personal mission	Rare—only in wellness startups	Minimal	Low—profit-driven	Absent—focus on speed, volume
Growth Trajectory (2020–2030)	Projected CAGR: 6–10% globally	~8–10% CAGR	3–6% CAGR	4–5% CAGR	12–15%, but with regulatory pressure
Self-Development Focus	Strong – training in communication, mindset	Limited – job-role focused	Low – technical focus	Minimal – transactional roles	Low – task-oriented
Spiritual Alignment	High – community support, purpose-driven	Rare	Not a focus	Not significant	Absent
Empowerment & Leadership	Core emphasis – especially among women	Hierarchical, slow	Not a core element	Limited	None – gig-focused
Work-Life Balance	Flexible – individual controls	Often demanding	Physically demanding	Shift-based	Unpredictable hours

Figure A.15: Comparison of Direct Selling vs other sectors of Employment.

The direct selling industry brings in more than \$200 billion around the world, with India alone bringing in INR 19,020 Cr in FY22. It can also create a lot of assets, which means you can make money without working and even pass it down to your kids. This is different from gig and retail jobs, which are limited by wages.

QNET encourages community, purpose, and self-improvement in the mind and spirit, with a strong focus on values and leadership—something that is lacking in many other fields. For example, IT may help you make more money, but it doesn't always help you connect with your emotions and spirit.

In short, QNET's direct selling model is a strong alternative to traditional jobs because it offers financial stability, personal growth, and access for everyone. These are all important for India's changing social and economic landscape.

III. Micro-Entrepreneurship via QNET vs. Self-Employment via Amazon: A Comparative Evaluation

The figure 3 shows the main differences between QNET's micro-entrepreneurship model and Amazon's affiliate program (self-employment) platform. One big difference is that QNET lets people resell curated, globally sourced brands without having to make or handle inventory. This is different from Amazon sellers, who usually own or manage their own inventory, either by owning the stock or working with a third-party logistics company (FBA).

Feature	QNET (Micro-Entrepreneurship)	Amazon (Self-Employment)
Product Ownership	No manufacturing needed; resell curated global brands	Seller-owned or 3rd-party inventory
Risk	Low – No inventory, no logistics	Moderate to high – Stock, ads, logistics involved
Mediators Eliminated	All – Direct from platform to buyer	Retailers eliminated, but warehouses/logistics remain
Startup Investment	Moderate – Join as IR with product pack	Low to high – Affiliate to FBA models
Business Style	Micro-entrepreneurship with mentorship	Self-driven online business
Scale Method	Network expansion (team sales volume)	Product performance + marketing
Training & Mentorship	Built-in mentorship from	Community-based, self-led

Figure A.16: Self Employment on QNET vs Affiliate Marketing program (Amazon).

QNET is also good at reducing risk. QNET's business model automatically makes things easier and lowers financial risk because it doesn't require managing inventory or logistics. Amazon's model, on the other hand, is risky because it depends on how well the products work, how much advertising costs, and how deliveries are handled.

QNET makes sure that there are no middle layers between the platform and the buyer, so that the mediator is directly involved. While retailers can be skipped on Amazon, the chain still includes coordinating warehouses, shipping, and delivery support, which adds more friction to the backend.

QNET is still open for business when it comes to investing in start-ups. Aspiring entrepreneurs can start by buying a product pack and signing up as an Independent Representative (IR). On

the other hand, Amazon sellers may need a lot of money up front, depending on how they use the affiliate or FBA model.

QNET supports a mentored micro-entrepreneurship ecosystem that focusses on personal growth and business education. Amazon, on the other hand, uses a self-led approach where the seller's market knowledge and marketing skills are the main factors in their success.

The way that scaling works is also very different. QNET depends on expanding its network and the sales volume of its teams, which encourages growth through teamwork. Amazon, on the other hand, focusses more on how well a product works and how well each person markets it, making it more solitary and product-focused.

Lastly, QNET's business model includes training and mentoring, which helps people learn new skills and become leaders based on their values. Amazon sellers usually go through their journey on their own, even though there are community forums and resources to help them.

IV.QNET's direct selling model, traditional franchises, and traditional businesses.

When you compare QNET's direct selling model to traditional franchises and businesses, you can see big differences in how they work, how much money they need to make, and how long they can last. This difference is key to understanding why QNET's model is becoming more popular with new entrepreneurs, especially in developing economies like India.

First of all, QNET's start-up costs are much lower because it doesn't need physical infrastructure or inventory. This is different from traditional franchises, which need franchise fees, rents, and setup investments. Different types of traditional businesses have different start-up costs, but they tend to be medium to high depending on the industry.

QNET is again the best when it comes to operational overhead because it has low costs because it runs from home and relies on digital tools. On the other hand, traditional models have high ongoing costs like rent, salaries, and upkeep. This has a huge effect on profitability and long-term viability, especially in the beginning.

The person who owns and runs QNET still has control over it, which lets them make business decisions that are flexible. Franchises are run by the franchisor's SOPs, and traditional business owners are fully responsible for their businesses even though they have some freedom. In the same way, QNET has the lowest level of risk because it doesn't have to worry about fixed assets, while traditional businesses have to deal with a lot of capital and market risks.

Aspect	QNET Franchisee (Direct Selling)	Traditional Franchise	Traditional Business
Startup Cost	Low – minimal inventory or infra needed	High – franchise fee, setup cost, rent, staff	Medium to high – depending on industry & scale
Operational Overhead	Very low – home-based, digital tools	High – rent, salaries, maintenance	High – office/shop/factory maintenance, staff
Ownership & Control	Independent distributor with flexible model	Partial – controlled by franchisor's SOPs	Full control, but full risk
Brand Dependency	QNET brand + personal reputation-based	Strong – bound to franchisor's brand	Own brand building required
Risk Level	Low – no major fixed assets or liabilities	Medium – brand risk, capital risk	High – market risk, capital, competition
Income Potential	Variable – based on performance, scalable	Moderate – location and compliance bound	Varies – high risk, high reward if successful
Flexibility	Very high – work from anywhere, anytime	Low – fixed hours, location-based	Low to medium – depends on business type
Skill Requirement	Soft skills, communication, basic digital knowledge	Managerial, customer service, operational expertise	Broad – finance, ops, marketing, legal
Training & Support	Continuous – QNET system-based training and mentoring	Structured – franchisor provides initial and ongoing support	Self-driven – must create own support system
Scalability	High – network-based, low capital expansion	Limited – expansion needs capital and franchise approval	Challenging – needs funding and infrastructure
Personal Development	Core focus – mindset, leadership, self-growth	Limited – operational focus	Not a focus – unless intentionally invested in
Spiritual/Value Alignment	Strong – many direct selling models integrate purpose-driven themes	Rare	Rare
Community & Recognition	Integral – peer support, events, recognition culture	Limited – based on local performance	Minimal – self-driven recognition
Time to Profitability	Short – weeks to months if consistent effort	Long – depends on setup, location, footfall	Varies – could take years to break even

Figure A.17: Franchise comparison between QNET, Traditional Franchise and Traditional Business.

QNET is also more scalable because it can grow without needing a lot of money or approvals, unlike franchises and traditional businesses that need them.

QNET's ecosystem also includes personal growth, spiritual alignment, and community recognition through mentorship, leadership training, and a mission that is based on a purpose. Traditional setups, on the other hand, are usually focused on tasks or making money and don't have these kinds of things.

Lastly, it doesn't take long to make money with QNET—usually only weeks or months of hard work will do it. On the other hand, it can take years for traditional businesses to make back the money they spent to start up.

In short, QNET offers a low-risk, flexible, and mentorship-based way to start a business that is good for people who want to start a business but don't have a lot of money but are very motivated and adaptable.

V. Jewellery selling services by QNET

According to the comparison table 1, QNET's Kinnari jewellery line, which is only available through the Bernhard H. Mayer brand, fills a unique niche in both the Indian and international

jewellery markets. Traditional Indian jewellers like JKJ Jewellers, Tanishq, and Kalyan Jewellers focus on traditional designs and sales channels. QNET, on the other hand, offers a hybrid model that combines European styles, global access, and direct selling. This makes it not just a jewellery brand but also a business opportunity (Kalyani, 2019).

Table A.16: comparison of Jewellery sellers between Kinnari (QNET) vs other jewellery sellers (Kalyani, 2019).

Criteria	Bernhard H. Mayer JKJ Jewellers		Tanishq	Kalyan Jewellers	Kinnari (QNET)
Country of Origin	Switzerland	India (Jaipur)	India (Tata Group)	India	India / International
Founded	1871	1868	1994	1993	~2010s (QNET exclusive)
Ownership	Private (QNET exclusive)	Family-owned	Tata Group	Family-owned (A.M. Group)	QNET exclusive
Product Range	Gold, Silver, Watches	Gold, Kundan, Polki	Gold, Diamond, Daily Wear	Gold, Wedding, Diamond	Designer Lifestyle Jewels
Design Focus	European Minimal Luxury	Royal/Traditional	Modern + Traditional	Wedding/Traditional	Indo-Western/Contemporary
Gold Purity	18K / 22K	22K / Kundan / Polki	18K, 22K, 24K	22K, 24K	18K, 22K
Diamond Certification	IGI / GIA (some)	BIS Hallmarked Gold	IGI / SGL certified	IGI certified	IGI Certified
Customization	Limited	Yes	Limited	Limited	Limited
Avg. Pricing (INR/g)	7,000-10,000	6,800-7,500	6,800-8,500	6,800-8,000	8,000-10,000
Brand Trust/Credibility	Medium "High (niche)	High (regional)	Very High (Pan-India)	Very High (South/India)	Medium (QNET community)
Global Availability	Online (QNET)	Jaipur / Limited Export	Global (via Tata)	GCC & India	QNET Global Online
Business Opportunity	Direct Selling Model	None	None	None	Direct Selling (QNET)
Target Market	Luxury/QNET Buyers	Traditional Buyers	Middle-Upper Class	Wedding Buyers	Young, Stylish Earners
After-Sales / Buyback	Limited	Strong	Strong (Tanishq Promise)	Strong (My Kalyan)	Limited

Bernhard H. Mayer is different from Indian brands like JKJ (1868), Tanishq (1994), and Kalyan (1993) because it is from Switzerland and has a long history. Kinnari's Indo-Western design style is different from the traditional and wedding-focused styles of the other brands. It appeals to younger, cosmopolitan earners. Kinnari jewellery is more European minimal luxury, which is great for people who like modern, elegant design.

When it comes to the purity of gold, all brands offer high standards, usually between 18K and 24K, and QNET's offerings are similar. The diamond certification from IGI and GIA for Bernhard H. Mayer is in line with international standards, just like Tanishq and Kalyan's IGI/SGL-certified pieces. But QNET doesn't offer as many customisation options as local jewellers like JKJ, who do offer custom services.

QNET's biggest advantage is that it is available and can be done online all over the world. While the other companies sell their jewellery through stores or retail chains, QNET sells its jewellery directly to customers. This lets people make money by selling high-end goods. This method makes luxury retail more accessible to everyone and combines it with business, something that Tanishq, Kalyan, or JKJ can't do.

Traditional brands have better after-sales services and buyback policies, but QNET makes up for this with its global reach and appeal to a tech-savvy, entrepreneurial generation. So, Kinnari and Bernhard H. Mayer stand out as lifestyle choices that people want to make that are also part of an empowering economic model.

VI.QVI Holidays vs. Club Mahindra Travel Club

The table 2 compares QVI Holidays by QNET with Club Mahindra Travel Club makes it very clear how much better QNET's travel services are, especially for today's consumer who wants flexibility, variety, and the chance to make money through direct selling.

Table A.17: Holiday services offered by QNET vs other holiday selling services.

Aspect	Club Mahindra	QVI by QNET
Resort Count	125+ resorts in India & a few countries	3,000+ resorts in 100+ countries
Hotel Access	Limited to tie-ups	1.3 million+ hotels worldwide
Ownership	Membership model	Flexible digital travel platform (Dream Trips, tripsavr)
Booking Flexibility	Rigid date allotments	Dynamic & customisable trips
Income Scope	Only customer benefit	Travel + distribution + income for promoters

One of the most important things that sets them apart is the number of resorts. Club Mahindra runs about 125 resorts, mostly in India but also in a few other countries. On the other hand, QVI by QNET has access to more than 3,000 resorts in more than 100 countries. QVI's large international presence makes it a competitive platform for travellers who want to see and experience different cultures outside of their own country (*QNET | Man City Partners & Sponsors | Mancity.com*, 2025).

When it comes to hotels, Club Mahindra can only work with resorts and hotel chains. But QVI gives you access to more than 1.3 million hotels around the world, thanks to sites like Dream Trips and tripsavr. Users can plan their trips with a lot of freedom and a wide range of prices, which makes it appealing to both budget and luxury travellers.

Club Mahindra has a traditional membership model, which means that members often have to pay a fee to join, pay a set amount each year, and can only use the club for a limited amount of time. On the other hand, QVI has a flexible digital travel model that lets you use it in different ways and gets rid of a lot of the old rules that come with traditional travel clubs (Shade, 2002).

Another big difference is how flexible the booking is. Club Mahindra has strict rules about when people can book, which means that people often have to plan ahead and have trouble finding rooms during busy times. QVI stands out because it lets users customise and change their bookings, making it easy for them to plan trips on the fly.

Finally, the most visionary part may be the range of income. Club Mahindra only offers benefits to its members, like vacations, but there is no financial incentive. QVI is part of the direct selling ecosystem, which means it makes money in a different way. By promoting travel services and building a network, distributors and users can turn their free time into a business opportunity.

In short, QVI by QNET not only changes the way Indians travel around the world, but it also gives them an entrepreneurial edge that connects leisure and work.

VII.QNET vs. Health & Beauty Product Showrooms

The health and beauty industry are changing quickly, and platforms like QNET are changing the way things used to be done by using new technologies and selling directly. The cost of setting up is a big difference. It costs a lot to start a regular wellness showroom or spa because you have to rent space, buy equipment, hire licensed staff, and pay for ongoing therapies. QNET's model, on the other hand, doesn't need any physical infrastructure at all. Instead, it lets distributors work online through its powerful e-commerce platform (Rodrik and Sandhu, 2025).

Table A.18: Comparison of QNET vs other health and beauty product services (Shi et al., 2024).

Aspect	Offline Health Showrooms (Wellness, Spa, etc.)	QNET Wellness (Amezcu, Physio Radiance, EDG3, etc.)
Setup Cost	High (equipment, rental, staff, therapy costs)	No physical infrastructure needed
Product Access	Limited to city or local chain	Global customer & delivery network
Staffing	Trained professionals required	Self-service e-commerce model
Training & Support	Minimal or internal	Global bootcamps, leadership, system training
Legacy Business	Usually limited to founder	Generational income model through the QNET compensation plan

Physical stores are usually limited to a city or region, which can make it harder for them to reach new customers and grow. On the other hand, QNET has a global network of customers and delivery services, which makes it easy for people to get health and wellness products like Amezcu, EDG3, and Physio Radiance across borders. This makes it much easier for business owners to grow.

The two models also differ in terms of staffing needs. Traditional showrooms need trained workers to provide services, but QNET gives each distributor the tools they need to run their own online business, which lowers the need for workers and increases profit margins. Also, the systems for training and support are very different. Physical showrooms only offer limited or internal training, but QNET offers global bootcamps, structured mentorship, and leadership development programs to help distributors become more skilled and grow (Krongboonjarus, 2001).

Lastly, QNET's unique selling point is that it helps people make legacies. Most brick-and-mortar wellness businesses only last as long as the founder or their immediate family. But QNET's pay structure lets people pass on their income to future generations, which helps people build wealth over time. This feature is especially useful in India's economy, where sustainable entrepreneurship is important for fighting unemployment and underemployment.

To sum up, QNET's wellness offering is a modern, entrepreneurial alternative to traditional health and beauty businesses because it is easy to access, can grow, and will last for a long time.

VIII.Kent, Sharp & Other Home Appliances vs. QNET Home Pure, Sharp (via QNET), etc.

The comparison chart between traditional local dealerships (like those that sell Kent, Sharp, and other home appliances) and QNET's smart distribution model (which sells Home Pure and Sharp products through QNET) makes a strong case for how digital direct selling platforms are changing the way people shop. The key differences, looked at from a number of operational angles, show that QNET has strategic advantages in terms of scalability, ease of use, and access for consumers.

Table A.19: Comparison of QNET vs home appliance sellers (Kent, 2013).

Aspect	Local Dealerships	QNET Smart Distribution
Territory Limit	Fixed area dealership	Global online reach

Logistics	Dealer must manage stock/delivery.	QNET manages logistics & customer care.
Product Range	One brand-focused	Multiple global brands via one platform
Brand Tie-Ups	Local dealership only	Sharp, Kent, Home Pure, BHM & others under one umbrella
Revenue Model	Margin-based	Commission + rank-based rewards

To start, territory limits are a key structural difference. Traditional dealerships only work in small areas because of the physical infrastructure and agreements that are specific to those areas. On the other hand, QNET has a global online presence, which frees distributors from geographic limits and makes it easy for them to access a market without borders.

Traditional dealerships are in charge of keeping track of their inventory, storing it, and delivering it, which is a lot of work and costs a lot of money. QNET takes care of this by handling logistics and customer service directly through its central system. This not only makes things easier for distributors, but it also improves the customer experience by using the same service protocols.

When looking at the range of products, local dealers often only focus on one brand, which limits the options for customers. QNET, on the other hand, lets you access a wide range of well-known brands from around the world, like Sharp, Kent, and Home Pure, all from one digital platform. This carefully planned variety builds trust with customers and gives distributors more chances to sell to more than one customer (Kansiime *et al.*, 2025).

Brand tie-ups are also very different from each other. Local dealerships usually only sell one brand, but QNET has partnerships with many international companies. This gives them a competitive edge by bringing together high-quality products in areas like home appliances, wellness, and lifestyle.

Finally, the revenue models show a big change. Most of the time, traditional dealerships have fixed margins for each unit sold, which limits how much they can make. QNET uses a mix of commissions and performance-based rewards to pay its employees. This encourages them to keep working hard and building their networks.

In conclusion, QNET's smart distribution model is a modern, low-barrier, and scalable solution that goes beyond the limits of traditional dealerships. It shows what the future of home appliance stores will be like in a digital economy.

IX. Comparative Analysis: QNET's CHAIROS & Bernhard H. Mayer vs. Rolex, Rado, CIMIER & Mugnier

Table A. 20: Comparative Analysis: QNET's CHAIROS & Bernhard H. Mayer vs. Rolex, Rado, CIMIER & Mugnier

Brand	Country	Founded	Prestige Level	In-house Movement	Design Focus	Materials Used	Average Price Range	Market Availability	Collectability	Brand Heritage	After-sales Service
Rolex	Switzerland	1905	★★★★ (Luxury Icon)	✓ Yes	Classic / Luxury	Gold, Oyster steel, etc.	\$7,000–\$50,000+	Global, Showrooms	↑ Very High	🏆 Iconic	Excellent
CIMIER	Switzerland	1924	★★★ (Boutique Heritage)	✗ ETA/Sellita	Traditional	Stainless Steel	\$500–\$1,500	Limited, Online/Retail	Low	Heritage, niche	Moderate
Rado	Switzerland	1917	★★★★ (Design Innovation)	✓ Limited Models	Modern / Futuristic	Ceramic, Steel	\$800–\$5,000	Global Retail Network	Moderate	Design-focused Swiss	Good
Bernhard H. Mayer	Switzerland	1871	★★★ (Boutique Collector)	✗ Swiss ETA	Heritage / Minimalist	Stainless, Leather	\$1,000–\$3,000	Limited (QNET exclusive)	Niche Collectors	Historic but small-scale	Via QNET
Mugnier	Switzerland	1880s (revived)	★ (Niche Revival)	✗ Unknown/Sourced	Classic / Revival	Stainless, Leather	\$500–\$1,200	Very Limited	Very Low	Historic brand revival	Unknown / Limited
CHAIROS	Switzerland	Recent (21st Century)	★★★ (Emerging QNET Brand)	✗ Swiss ETA	Modern/Professional	Stainless Steel, Leather	\$300–\$2,000	QNET exclusive	Low	Emerging, QNET-owned	Via QNET

In the high-end and collector watch business, brand history and exclusivity often influence what people buy. Rolex is the clear symbol of prestige. The company has been around since 1905 in Switzerland and offers in-house movements, showrooms around the world, and great customer service after the sale. Everyone agrees that it looks and feels luxurious. But this worldwide appeal comes with high prices that range from \$7,000 to \$50,000 or more, making owning one something that many people want but can't afford ('QNET', 2025).

On the other hand, QNET's Bernhard H. Mayer and CHAIROS make it easier for more people to get into the world of high-end watches. Even though they don't have their own movements and use Swiss ETA mechanisms, they focus on great design, low prices, and a unique history. Bernhard H. Mayer, which has been around since 1871, makes simple, elegant pieces with a focus on heritage that appeal to niche collectors. The QNET platform makes it exclusive, which increases the brand's boutique value while keeping the price between \$1,000 and \$3,000.

CHAIROS is a newer brand that focusses on professionals who want modern styles in the \$300 to \$2,000 range. You can only get it through QNET (QNET: Wellness & Lifestyle Direct Selling Company, 2021).

CIMIER is known for its traditional craftsmanship, and Rado is known for using new materials like ceramic. However, their collectability and heritage appeal are not as strong as Rolex's. Mugnier is an old brand, but it is still not well known and has very little revival and almost no collectability.

QNET's placement of CHAIROS and Bernhard H. Mayer in a direct selling model lets customers not only buy Swiss-made watches at a lower price, but also become distributors and start their own businesses. These watches are more than just things to buy; they are gateways to a growing e-commerce ecosystem that supports financial inclusion and small business ownership (Cochran et al., 2021).

In short, QNET's goal is not to replace established brands like Rolex, but to make Swiss luxury desirable yet possible, combining watch ownership with business opportunity; something that traditional brands do not do (Cochran et al., 2021).

Comparing QNET-affiliated watch brands like CHAIROS, Bernhard H. Mayer, CIMIER, and Mugnier with well-known brands like Rolex, Rado, and CIMIER gives us a good look at how the luxury and premium watch industry is changing. Rolex and Rado are still the kings of the traditional luxury retail market because of their famous history, new ideas, and wide range of prices. QNET's watch brands, on the other hand, offer a unique value proposition that focusses on accessibility, exclusivity, and business opportunities ('QNET', 2025).

Table 21: Ranking of the watch companies with respect to QNET.

Brand	Founded	Country	Brand Rank (Global)	Heritage & Credibility	Craftsmanship & Innovation	Avg. Price Range (USD)	Market Type	QNET Association	Earning Opportunity
Rolex	1905	Switzerland	★★★★★ (Top Tier)	Iconic global brand, high resale value	In-house calibers, COSC-certified	\$7,000 – \$150,000+	Luxury Retail	✗	✗
Rado	1917	Switzerland	★★★★	Ceramic innovation, Swatch Group	High-tech materials, modern designs	\$1,000 – \$5,000	Premium Retail	✗	✗
CIMIER (QNET City)	1924	Switzerland	★★★	Swiss brand with QNET tie-up since 2013	Limited-edition QNET City models	\$700 – \$3,500	Direct Selling (QNET)	✓ Limited Collections	✓ Yes (via QNET IR)
Bernhard H. Mayer	1871	Switzerland	★★★	Long heritage, exclusive to QNET	Modern Swiss-made watches	\$800 – \$5,000	Direct Selling (QNET)	✓ Full Brand Partner	✓ Yes (via QNET IR)
Mugnier (Atelier de Mugnier)	1786 (Revived)	Switzerland	★★★★★	Heritage revival under QNET	Swiss movement, classic finish	\$600 – \$4,000	Direct Selling (QNET)	✓ Full Brand Partner	✓ Yes (via QNET IR)
CHAIROS	21st Century	Switzerland	★★	Emerging QNET in-house brand	Swiss movement, classic to modern styles	\$300 – \$2,000	Direct Selling (QNET)	✓ Full Brand Partner	✓ Yes (via QNET IR)

Bernhard H. Mayer, which has been around since 1871, and Mugnier, which was brought back under QNET's umbrella, are both examples of Swiss precision and craftsmanship. They both make high-quality watches that cost between \$600 and \$5,000. These brands are still credible and do well around the world because they use QNET's direct selling model. This lets distributors wear and earn money from these exclusive collections ('KPMG', 2025).

CHAIROS is QNET's own new brand. It has Swiss movements and a range of styles to appeal to modern customers, even though it is still new to the market. With a starting price of just \$300, it becomes a good choice for people who want to start their own business or who love watches and want to get good deals (Liao, 2008).

Traditional retail models don't let people make money, but QNET's structure combines entrepreneurship with luxury consumption, so Independent Representatives (IRs) can make money by selling these high-end watches. QNET's watch collection is a great alternative to traditional luxury watch stores because it combines Swiss heritage with a business opportunity. This is especially true in developing economies like India, where affordability and aspiration meet ('QNET', 2025).

F. So, What's the Problem, then?

The QNET model, which lets you reach people all over the world through D2D and D2C, is still a strong business idea. But the problems don't come from the idea itself; they come from how it is carried out, how people see it, and how it is sometimes used incorrectly (Fan, 2001).

First of all, the fact that it works on such a large scale and is easy to get into with little money often makes it seem too good to be true. Some people lie about the opportunity or exaggerate how much money they could make because they want to make up for what they spent. QNET has a strict policy against income guarantees, but there have been a few cases of distributors mis-selling, promising instant wealth, or guaranteed commissions. This hurts the company's reputation and makes customers less likely to trust it ('QNET', 2025).

These lies go against QNET's official code, but they keep happening because there aren't enough people watching and enforcing them. The company says that there are ways for people to complain about IDs who act unethically, but enforcement is still not consistent across regions. The hybrid structure can also cause confusion because commissions come from real product sales, but the multi-level format can be mistaken for a pyramid scheme that is based on recruiting. QNET says that bonuses are based on sales, not recruitment, but people outside the company sometimes see high recruiter earnings as proof of unethical schemes, which shows that many people don't understand (Asavatitanonta, 2003).

QNET has also had to deal with legal issues. The Economic Offences Wing has filed FIRs based on complaints about making false promises and raising money during the process of building a network (Moneylife). QNET and Vihaan have denied the allegations and are still working with the authorities, but these kinds of things show how reputations can be hurt in changing regulatory environments.

To sum up, QNET's platform is visionary, but it will only work if it is run in a fair way, with clear communication, and strong oversight. Without these, it could face criticism and problems with its operations, even if its basic model is still sound and promising.

G. Lack of Understanding & Mindset for Digital Selling

The e-commerce-enabled direct selling model from QNET has a strong infrastructure and can reach people all over the world, but many distributors don't understand it well enough or have the wrong expectations, which stops it from reaching its full potential. The main reason for this

disconnects is that people have unrealistic ideas about how to make money and don't understand what commission-based entrepreneurship is all about.

1. Unrealistically High Expectations

A lot of new people want to join QNET because it's easy to do so. A small registration fee gives you access to a digital shopfront and product catalogues. But some distributors think they can make a lot of money quickly without realising that QNET's model is based on consistent work—selling products and building relationships—not on passive recruitment. QNET itself warns in its success resources that "unrealistic targets, lack of commitment to the process, and lack of hard work" are the main reasons why distributors fail. People who don't understand how the model works often make false claims about "guaranteed wealth" or "weekly incomes that are the same as big corporate salaries." ('QNET', 2025).

2. Misjudging the D2D & D2C Value Proposition

When distributors don't understand that even small amounts of capital still need strategic marketing and regular activity, another problem arises. Some distributors wrongly think that low investment means low effort and can't use the D2D/D2C framework to its full potential without a lot of money. They might sign up, but they won't be able to make sales or build a network because they don't have the mindset of a disciplined entrepreneur ('QNET', 2025).

3. Consequence: Mis-selling & Reputational Risks

These mistakes not only hurt people's results, but they also hurt QNET's reputation. Some distributors may make false promises or sell products that aren't what they say they are because they're impatient. This can hurt the credibility of the ecosystem and direct selling as a whole. Even though QNET has an ethical framework, including a Code of Ethics, these violations are hard to catch on a large scale, which makes people doubt the company.

4. Need for Mindset Development

The answer is to change the distributor's way of thinking from "quick wealth" to "sustainable entrepreneurship." QNET is successful because it focusses on personal impact over income. This is clear in its training materials, which stress developing a "winning direct selling mindset" and focussing on long-term growth and professional behaviour. Training that never stops, setting realistic goals, and being open about how hard work pays off will all be very important in making this model a real digital micro-enterprise solution that gives power to India's youth and gig workers ('QNET,' 2025).

H. Legal & Regulatory Scrutiny

People have been sceptical of QNET's new direct-selling model that uses e-commerce because of rumours that it is a Ponzi scheme or a pyramid scheme. This is not because the idea is bad, but because of misunderstandings and bad practices in the field. Even though QNET follows India's laws, its multi-level commission structure has caused confusion, and some distributors have acted unethically, which has led to both public concern and government action (Fekadu, 2023).

Many people think that QNET works like a Ponzi scheme, promising high returns to people who join early and then using the money from new recruits to pay them. In fact, QNET's pay structure is based on sales, with bonuses based on how many products people buy, not how many people they recruit. The company has made this difference clear to the public by saying that distributors are not paid for getting other people to sign up, but for showing that they can make sales. Legal proof backs up this claim: in February 2017, the Karnataka High Court threw out FIRs against its Indian franchise, Vihaan Direct Selling. In March 2017, the Supreme Court put 19 FIRs on hold, confirming its legal status and allowing it to keep operating as long as it follows the rules (Chow, Choy and Lee, 2007).

Some IDs, on the other hand, have crossed ethical and legal lines by making false claims about their income or using marketing techniques that change how people see things. Even though these actions don't follow QNET's official rules, they have led to FIRs and investigations by the Enforcement Directorate in several places (Moneylife). Authorities also looked into Vihaan for allegedly lying, but QNET India says these cases are either resolved or not proven (Beek, 2019).

Legal uncertainty about 'Direct Selling' platforms in India has made things even more difficult because people have been able to misinterpret the rules. Even though they are following the Consumer Protection (Direct Selling) Rules, misunderstandings still happen. The e-commerce part makes things more complicated some officials mix up how QNET works with unregistered investment schemes (Liao, 2008).

To deal with these issues, QNET has taken proactive steps like issuing public rebuttals, holding workshops to raise legal awareness, enforcing ID compliance training, and working with regulators. The company has also started programs to teach its network of distributors about ethical sales, how to present a business correctly, and the law ('QNET', 2025).

I. Future of QNET

QNET is moving forward in a positive way, based on new technologies, ethical leadership, and scalable business models. A key part of this change is QNET's strategic partnership with Microsoft. Microsoft rebuilt QNET's backend infrastructure to make sure it has strong cybersecurity, no downtime, and safe identity management through Microsoft Entra and Sentinel. This digital foundation shows that QNET is dedicated to being open and trustworthy, giving distributors a safe and stable place to run their businesses (Liao, 2008).

At the same time, QNET has changed the way it thinks about business through its QNETPRO program. This global compliance and accreditation program teaches IDs how to do digital marketing, understand compensation, sell ethically, and be honest in their work. The QNETPRO curriculum sets high standards for behaviour, making sure that micro-entrepreneurs act responsibly and encouraging long-term business growth in a controlled environment ('QNET', 2025).

Another important step in QNET's growth is the enforcement of a zero-tolerance policy. Reports say that hundreds of IDs have been banned around the world for not following the rules. This protects customer trust and strengthens the platform's legitimacy. This proactive governance shows that QNET has strong internal controls and is committed to leading with values (*QNET | Man City Partners & Sponsors | Mancity.com*, 2025).

In the future, QNET's model shows what the industry could be like: digital-first, low-capital businesses that can include everyone. Big companies like Samsung, Patanjali, and Tata are likely to use similar D2D and D2C models. QNET's growth sets a standard for youth employment and flexible business ownership. QNET shows that e-commerce and direct selling can empower millions of people as real micro-businesses in India and other similar economies in the future by bringing together ethical governance, tech infrastructure, and skills development (Shade, 2002).

J. QNET & Its IDs Are Now:

Using Microsoft-powered infrastructure to run 100% transparently, making sure that data systems are safe, compliant, and can be audited. This builds trust with both customers and distributors ('QNET', 2025).

Strengthening an entrepreneurial way of thinking: The company teaches IDs to focus on business, skill development, and doing the right thing, not making money quickly. The

company's QNETPRO program and Code of Conduct encourage long-term success based on values.

Enforcing a policy of no tolerance: QNET keeps an eye on its distributors' behaviour through Red-Lines and its Compliance Department. It fires anyone who is found to be mis-selling or making false claims (Fan, 2001).

QNET is becoming a textbook example of scalable micro-entrepreneurship by doing these things. It shows that a digital-first, low-capital D2C/D2D model can give young people and informal workers long-term power, as long as there are strong rules and ethics in place to support it.

In the future, big companies like Samsung, Patanjali, or Tata may do the same thing and use digital-first, inventory-free micro-franchise models that help young people find jobs without having to make big investments. So, QNET's model could lead to a bigger change in how India and other economies like it plan for digital entrepreneurship and jobs (Mehta, 2023).

K. Limitations for the Direct Sellers

Even though they seem promising, studies that look at e-commerce and direct selling models, like QNET India, have some big problems:

a. Data Access and Reliability

Analyses often use data that companies report, such as sales numbers, distributor earnings, and the number of new hires. This kind of information may be selectively shown to highlight growth and success, which can lead to reporting bias. There is still not enough independent verification, which makes it hard to objectively judge the real impact on employment (Asari *et al.*, 2023).

b. Regulatory Complexity

India's direct selling industry is subject to a patchwork of rules and regulations that differ from state to state and even from country to country. For example, the Consumer Protection (Direct Selling) Rules 2021 and the Prize and Chits Money Circulation Act have different meanings in different states. Because of this complexity, it is hard to do comparative policy analysis, and it could lead to inconsistent enforcement and different experiences for different stakeholders (Podile *et al.*, 2020).

c. Generalisability Constraints

Case studies usually look at digital direct-selling platforms that are successful and have a lot of online infrastructure. These results might not be true for smaller businesses or businesses in rural areas with poor internet access. Poor telecommunications and digital infrastructure are still a barrier to wider use (Graham and Hanna, 2011).

d. Measuring Long-Term Impact

Most studies look at short-term results like how many people were hired or how much money they made at first. It is not common to keep track of long-term metrics like worker retention, steady income growth, and career mobility. This makes it hard to know if gig-style direct selling leads to long-term economic and skill-based benefits (Shade, 2002).

e. Consumer Trust and Ethical Practice

Studies often don't look at market outcomes like how real a product is, how much people trust it, and how often false claims are made. Deceptive pyramid schemes and exaggerated earnings claims are examples of unethical behaviour that can damage the credibility of an industry. This is a limitation that hasn't been studied enough in real-world situations (Asari *et al.*, 2023).

To accurately assess the potential of e-commerce-driven direct selling as a long-term, inclusive way to create jobs, it is important to acknowledge these limitations. Future research should include data that has been independently verified, look at a variety of operating environments, and use longitudinal studies to look at long-term effects.

L. Final Answer: Nothing Is Inherently Wrong; But Execution Matters

QNET's main idea is a cloud-based, global D2D (Direct-to-Distributor) and D2C (Direct-to-Consumer) platform that doesn't need a lot of money to get started. This idea is definitely new. It really does have a visionary approach to micro-entrepreneurship and flexible gig-style work in developing economies like India. But how well it works depends entirely on doing the right thing, being honest, and being clear about the law ('QNET', 2025).

It's a big problem when some Independent Distributors (IDs) lie about their earnings or the business model. QNET's Code of Ethics makes it clear that making false claims about income is not allowed, and that effort and reward structures must be clear (QNET News & Direct Selling updates). But in the field, people sometimes take shortcuts, making false promises that hurt consumer trust and set expectations wrong. These kinds of actions hurt the brand and put the reputations of distributors at risk because they don't understand the model (*QNET | Man City Partners & Sponsors | Mancity.com*, 2025).

Another issue is that the ID's expectations don't match up with the money they can actually make. QNET's pay plan rewards consistent sales, not just passive recruitment. However, some new people don't understand this because they hear stories of quick success and then get disappointed when their earnings don't live up to their expectations. This misalignment makes it clear that the model is not a way to get rich quickly, but rather a disciplined, effort-based way to own a business for the long term ('QNET - Advancing Leadership Excellence in Manitoba,' 2025).