

Pushed or Pulled? Motivation of Sri Lankans to Become Gig Workers

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The gig economy is expanding with more workers joining digital labor platforms globally. Gig work has become popular in Sri Lanka as well, especially during the recent past. Since the gig economy is still a relatively new concept in Sri Lanka, the area is understudied. Hence, the objective of this research is to examine what motivates Sri Lankans to become gig workers. We use push-pull theory as the theoretical lens of the study. Based on qualitative research methodology under the interpretive research paradigm, 22 gig workers from various backgrounds were interviewed in person to identify their motives and experiences with web-based digital labor platforms. This study found four important reasons for Sri Lankans to choose gig work, 1) pursuit of passion 2) pursuit of money (earning in foreign currency, gaining financial independence and an additional source of income), 3) pursuit of agency and 4) pursuit of developmental opportunities. While the motivation for participants to join gig work was mainly identified as pull motivation, in some instances it was identified that the participants were also pushed to join gig work.

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