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## AMITepoll

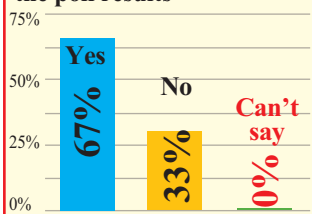
Do you agree with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's statement that India is now the "new attractive" investment destination in the world?

- a) Yes  
b) No  
c) Can't say

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## POLL RESULT for GT issue January 17, 2022

Do you think the recent decision made by the EC to replace traditional means of election campaigning like physical rallies with virtual campaigns is going to affect the poll results



Results as on January 22, 2022

## Coming Next

Warriors of India

# The freelance rise

## The Rise Of An Economy That Focuses on Income Generation Via Gigs

Shreya Dwivedi, AIS VKC Lko, XII E

While it is common knowledge that scores of people lap up a steady paycheck and other perks that a conventional job proffers, one simply cannot dismiss the appeal to work for none but oneself that comes with freelancing. A look at the stats and things become more pellucid - out of the total global workforce of around 3.5 billion, an estimated 1.1 billion (and counting) are presently moiling as gig workers in one field or the other; one-third of which come from India alone. And if projections are anything to go by, gig economy would go on to become a 455 billion USD entity by the end of 2023, which is nearly double the 2018 value of 204 billion USD substantiating that it's here to stay and surge. So, here's what's up and why!

### A not so slow but steady rise

Spawned by jazz musicians in 1915 to refer to any sort of job opportunity, the term 'gig' truly gained prevalence in the 1990s in tandem with the digital era. For nearly 10% of the US workforce then labored as contractors or on-call workers peddling their craft without the constraints of corporate obligations. The 1995 launch of Craigslist, an American classified advertisements website (active in 70 countries with an annual revenue of over 1 billion USD today), however, proved to be a watershed moment in the history of freelancing, for it helped countless locals search for jobs, services, etc., online. Soon after, websites like Upwork and other crowdsourcing marketplaces surfaced, offering gigs to those wanting to work on a contractual-basis and get paid for it. Currently, Upwork has over 145.4 thousand registered clients, with its annual revenue amounting to about 373 million USD. With these steady advancements at play year on year, the Great Recession of 2007-09 ramped gig economy up another notch. With over 15 million people being laid off and an acute unavailability of conventional jobs withal, people found freelancing to be the new avenue to seek employment in. Consequently, independent workers worldwide proliferated - in EU, the numbers rose from 7.7 million to 9.6 million between 2008 and 2015, marking a steep rise of

24%; in US, concurrently, nearly 1.3 million new non-employer establishments were set up. More recently, the COVID-19 pandemic, with its benefits of remote working and flexible scheduling, dispelled any residual doubts regarding the viability of a gig workforce, as is evident in how participation in this sector soared by a whopping 33% and its earnings reached 1.7 trillion USD in the last year alone; where India was one of the fastest growers with 160% upsurge in its gig revenue.

### A not so easy but smooth ride

Similar to any other job, freelancing has its own perks...

■ The most evident benefit of the gig economy is the work freedom that freelancers enjoy. They get to choose where, when, with whom, and what they wish to work on, as against the traditional 9-5 desk job. For instance, Uber, with its services spread over 71 countries, allows people to avoid the bureaucracy of a taxi agency and apply as a taxi driver as long as they have their own vehicle; the drivers get to decide whether or not they want to go for a trip as well. Besides, as per The State of Remote Work 2021 survey, 31% freelancers see flexible schedule as the biggest reason behind their preference of gig work, with 51% going as far as to say that they have a better quality of life as a free worker, so won't consider going back to traditional work for any amount of money.

■ Though the remuneration of a gig worker varies from company to company, but they often charge hourly rates for their work. This gives them the power to control their work hours and get paid for any number of extra hours they work for. According to Payoneer, freelancers worldwide earn 21 USD an hour on average. As a result, more than half of freelancers in 2019 considered themselves more monetarily secure than traditional workers.

■ Flexibility of gig work provides the inactive populace such as those old-aged, disabled, retired, etc., with a fair chance at working again. For instance, Airbnb, that permits anyone with a spare room to make an income by renting it, has over 400,000 senior hosts (aged 40 and above), making it their fastest-growing host demographic. In one such incident, in 2016, nearly 320,000 Airbnb hosts aged 60 and above managed to earn 747 million USD.

■ Gig economy helps organisations reduce their costs and also save their time, for they aren't hiring a fixed-term employee who would demand all the privileges that come with the post. Apart from that, it also helps them with scalability as well as hiring the right person for the appropriate amount of time. Google's workforce comprised 120,000 workers in 2019, higher than its permanent employee count of 102,000. Likewise, 30% of the Fortune 500 companies today rely on freelancers to fill gaps.

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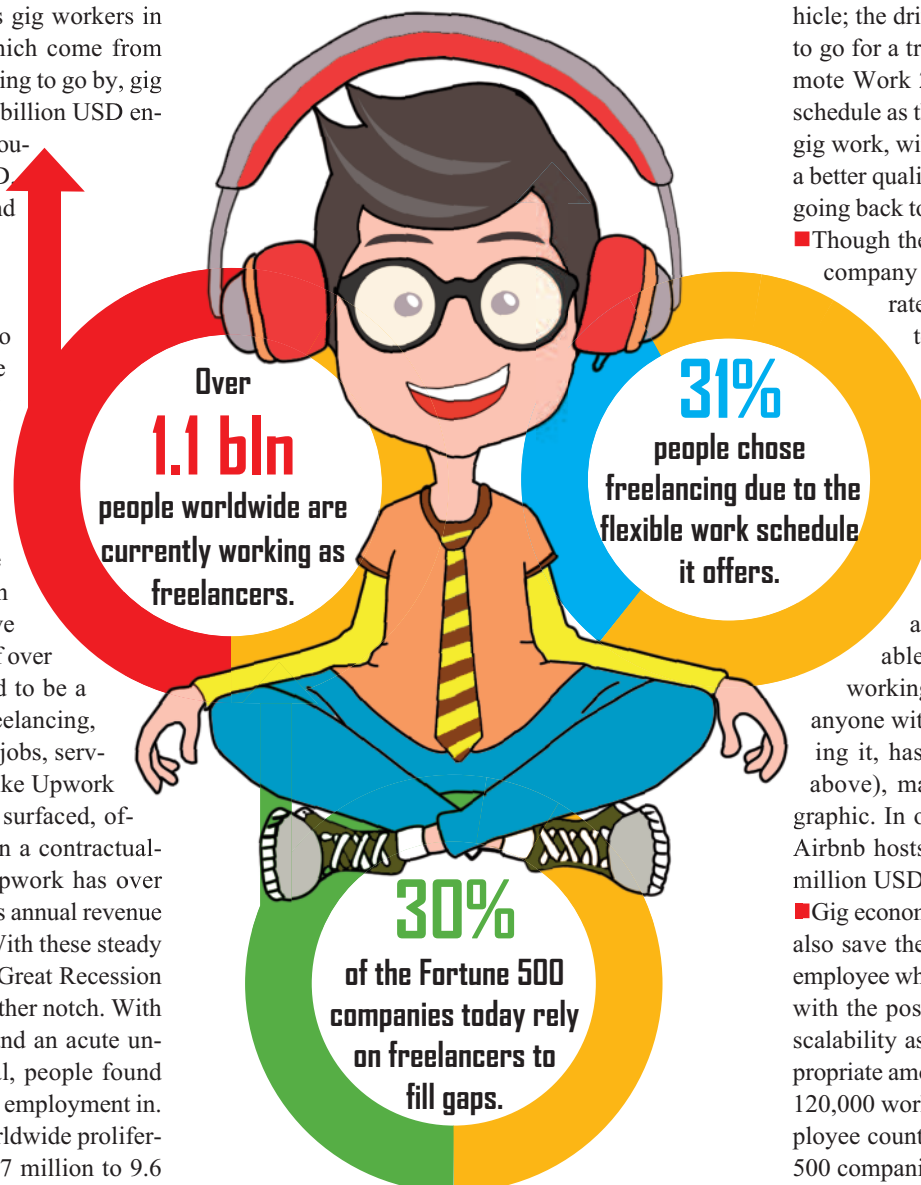


Illustration: Ravinder Gusain, GT Network

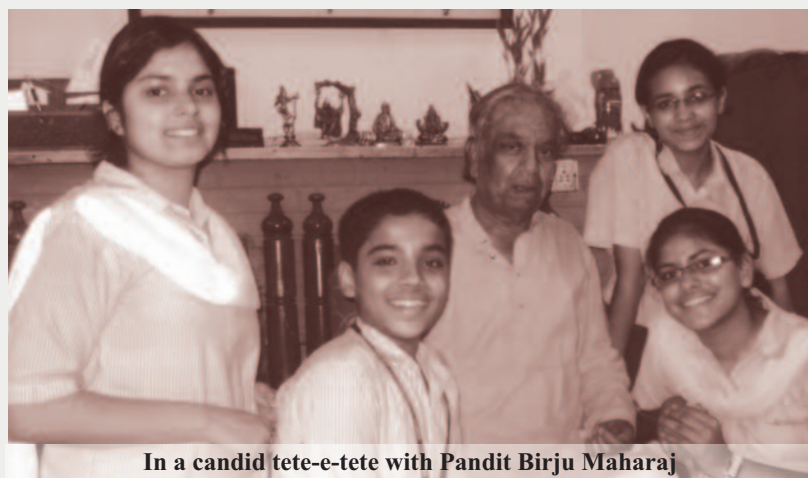
# Dance is the rhythm of my life

## Pandit Birju Maharaj shares his passion and love for dance in an exclusive interview with The Global Times Reporters...

“Ta Thai - have you ever looked at these words closely? ‘Ta’ is straight, ‘Thai’ has a curve; one is male, the other female. And when they join to make ‘Tat’, they create the world in which we live our entire life,” said Kathak maestro Pandit Birju Maharaj in an exclusive interview with The Global Times. His thought provoking conversation brought forth the passion, simplicity, and humility of a legendary Guru whose pioneering journey into the world of dance and music left its trail, inspiring and evolving, capturing the hearts of all. Read on as we bring you excerpts from the same.

### When did you discover your leanings towards dance and music?

My rendezvous with Kathak began early at the age of 3. Hailing from the Lucknow *gharana*, I would often accompany my father to the dance class and to the darbars of Kings and Nawabs. The Nawab of Rampur was so fond of me that he would actually tell my father not to come without me. At times, I would be woken up at midnight to perform for him and then, in a childish way, I would



In a candid tete-e-tete with Pandit Birju Maharaj

pray he dies so that I don't have to get up from my sleep! However, as a good learner, I realised early on that I could perform flawlessly. Thus, I travelled with my father, perfecting my love for dance and securing a job as a dance teacher at Sangeet Bharatiya Sansthan in Lucknow, all at the tender age of 14.

**You have travelled extensively, sharing and teaching Kathak. Please share some interesting episodes with us?**

From dancing in the courts of Nawabs

to the international 'arena stage', my journey into the world of Kathak has been a very enriching experience. One incident that I would never forget is when I had to perform on an 'arena stage' in the US. I still remember how perplexed I was to have the audience all around me. Nevertheless, changing our direction with each step, my troupe and I gave the entire performance and silently giggled away. The next day, as we saw everybody appreciating the performance, we all had a good laugh!

### What has been the impact of dance in your life?

Dance is the poem of which each movement is a word. It is the expression and communication of emotion. Thus, as the rhythm of my life, Kathak is so much a part of me that I can feel it flowing in my veins and every breath that I take. We are inseparable!

### How can we revive the declining interest of youth in classical dance forms?

Television and cinema have a great influence on people. One dance direction for Madhuri Dixit in Devdas shot me to instant fame. Hence, this medium should be thoroughly harnessed to promote Indian classical dance forms in an interesting manner. But what we do instead is create reality shows which have nothing new to offer. Dance and music are not just about presenting something already there. For even a layman can sing a song in tune if he has heard it 300 times. It is thus truly sad that this medium is being used to promote mediocres who walk away with Rs 50 lakh cash awards, while the real talent lies hidden, lost and obscure.



This is a tribute to the Kathak maestro Pandit Birju Maharaj. For he may have left for his heavenly abode but his inspirational words will stay with us forever. Re-printing his interaction with GT reporters published in August, 2008.

### What message would you like to give to the students?

Patience is the foremost quality that every student needs to imbibe. For patience teaches concentration as well as creates a balance in our physical, mental, and emotional state. Life offers many temptations in the path to success; patience helps us overcome them. Whether you become a doctor or an engineer, let the rhythm in your pen and the wave in your voice guide you for good.

(As told to Meghna Bansal & Charu Gupta, AIS Noida, and Shantanu Dey & Ankita Naik, AIS Pushp Vihar)