A Review of Different Approaches to Measure the Gig Economy: Lessons for Sri Lanka

M.G.C.N. Madadeniya

Department of Census and Statistics, Sri Lanka
chethisl@gmail.com

Abstract

Although a limited number of studies has investigated the matters pertaining to gig work in Sri Lanka, investigating the gig economy has become necessary as it is an emerging sector especially during the current Covid-19 pandemic. Ascertaining the size, value and characteristics of the gig economy is indeed crucial for the accurate measurement of macroeconomic indicators, such as economic growth, employment and income, and for the implementation of necessary rules and regulations in the labour market. Given the fact that the gig economy is not yet fully captured by the existing censuses and surveys conducted by the statistical agencies in Sri Lanka, the two objectives of this study were first to evaluate various approaches used by countries worldwide to measure the gig economy, and second to draw lessons for Sri Lanka. To this end, the study conducted an integrative review of literature. Findings indicate that there is a huge potential for Sri Lanka to improve the existing censuses and surveys of the National Statistical Office of the country, and produce useful measures of gig work. The main reason is that while initiatives to measure gig work have already been taken, the existing censuses and surveys already have a wide scope which covers self-employment, secondary employment and informal employment, which are three main characteristics of most of the gig work.