

* Gig workers

- ↳ According to the new code on social security, 2020 gig worker defined as, "a person who performs work or participates in a work arrangement and earns from such activities outside of traditional employer-employee relationships".
- ↳ The work is usually temporary and completed during a specified time.
- ↳ Some common name includes contingent-workers, freelancers and independent contractor etc.
- ↳ New code on social security 2020, gives formal recognition to the gig workers.

News: Most gig workers lost income during pandemic according to a survey.

- (4) Employees' State Insurance Act 1948
 - (5) Employment Exchanges Act 1959
 - (6) Payment of Gratuity Act 1972
 - (7) Cine Workers Welfare Fund Act 1981
 - (8) Building & Other Construction Workers Welfare Cess Act, 1996
 - (9) Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act 2008
- brings unorganised sector, gig & platform workers under social security schemes.

* Gig Workers (Introduced in Code on Social Security)

- Someone who takes on hourly or part time jobs. Temporary nature of work.
- May be a carpenter or software developer.
- "Earns from activities outside the traditional employer-employee relationships." : Code

* Platform Workers (Introduced in Code on Social Security)

- One who provides specific services using online platform directly to individuals or organisations
Eg: Ola drivers, Zomato delivery persons
- Code mandates compulsory registration for both gig & platform workers.

* A secure future for platform workers

- Code on Social Security Bill, 2020
- Platform workers -
 - ↳ "are individuals who use an app (Eg: Uber) or a website to match themselves with customers, in order to provide a service in return for money." : OECD definition
 - ↳ Eg: Transport services, coding, writing product descriptions
- Often they are misclassified as 'independent contractors'
- Platform workers' rights movement
 - ↳ labour laws in Ontario and California are showing a move towards granting them employee status
 - ↳ Guarantee for minimum wage & welfare benefits

- Advantage of platform work

- Flexibility
- Sense of ownership

- Limitations existing

- Largely dictated by mechanisms of control wired by the algorithm.
 - ↳ affects pricing, allocation of work and hours.
- Entry into the platform requires investment or loans.
- Loans schemes facilitated by platform aggregators (like Ola) results in dependence on platform companies
 - ↳ Thus flexibility is lost.

- The Code on Social Security Bill, 2020

- ↳ tried to define 'platform work'
- ↳ but drew criticism from platform worker's associations for failing to delineate it from gig work

and unorganised work.

↳ Code states provision of basic welfare measures as a joint responsibility of Central Govt, platform aggregators and workers

↳ But does not states who will do what

- Role of platform workers in pandemic

- Delivery of essentials
- Kept the platform companies afloat despite the pandemic induced economic crisis

- Their role as public infra merits a joint responsibility by public & prt institutions to deliver welfare measures.

* Quality gigs, a solution to urban unemployment

- Data from CMIE

↳ sharp rise in national unemployment rate from 6.51% (Nov 2020) to 9.06% (Dec)

- For rural India (in 2020)

- employment support

↳ by MGNREGA

- Rural Development Ministry has already spent 90% of its ₹ 864000 crore allocation by Nov

- 13% of the 75 million households that demanded work did not get it.

- Urban India (2020)

- shuttered businesses

- many workers out of work

↳ had to take new forms of work

↳ some took to gig economy

- Fairwork Foundation's annual review of gig workers on 11 digital platforms

- Only 2 → Urban Company & Flipkart scored

more than 5 (out of 10)

- Bottom rankings (scoring less than 2) to four largest platform giants
↳ Uber, Ola, Swiggy, Zomato

- Need is to understand the gig workers & workers
↳ as no estimate of gig workers in India

- Is Regulation the Way?

- sensitive issue
- because for some workers, it is a side hustle but for others it is a primary source of employment
- A one size fits all regulatory strategy may unintentionally hurt the similar, yet distinct, market for highly skilled (& highly paid) freelancers

- A Viable strategy

- conditional govt partnership with platforms
↳ like Swiggy's Street Food Vendors prog. under PM SVANidhi
↳ onboarding of 36K street vendors on Swiggy's platform

- ↳ Swiggy ensured that each vendor is registered & certified by FSSAI.
- Similar collaborations on urban employment could be one way
Current proposal for Urban Employment Guarantee
 - ↳ peg daily worker wages @ ₹300 per day
 - ↳ i.e. cost of ₹ 1 lac crore to the exchequer
 - ↳ collabs will bring down costs significantly for both state & their partners