

A Review of the New Labour Laws, their Impact on Gig Cultivators in India, and the Way Forward

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Abstract

This review paper tries to explain the impact of four new labour laws, ‘Code on Wages, 2019’, ‘The Industrial Relations Code, 2020’, ‘The Code on Social Security, 2020’, and ‘The Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020’, on the gig cultivators who are working for platform-based goods and services delivery. The paper is based on secondary literature, such as press releases, guidelines by ministries concerned, newspaper articles, research articles, etc. The paper identifies that the code of Social Security has, for the first time ever, given a formal acknowledgement to gig and platform workers and opened a door for social security measures and initiatives for them. However, there are gaps in the classification of work, implementation, compliance protocols, and the gig cultivators’ rights, because of which the platform-based gig workers are still insecure on several fronts. This paper will help to identify the existing gaps and to better understand the role of the new labour laws for the gig cultivators and platform workers. The paper also includes some of the policy recommendations and implementation suggestions for better efficiency and results of the provisions of the new labour laws.

Keywords

Gig Cultivators; Gig Workers; New Labour Laws; The Code on Social Security, 2020; The Code on Wages, 2019; The Industrial Relations Code, 2020; The Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020

Introduction

With the rising technology, the platform-based work has taken shape in our day-to-day

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lives. The nature of such work is temporary and contract-based, which is part of the informal labour market system in the Indian economic structure. Such kind of work is called 'gig work', which means temporary, short-period work (Canpolat, 2025). People involved in performing gig work are called 'gig cultivators' or 'gig workers'. Though the standard definition of who the 'gig cultivators' are is not available, they are actually small farmers whose primary source of income is agriculture but who also work as agricultural labourers, construction-site workers, in other households as house helps, or in other jobs in the informal sector on a contract basis for short periods of time to substantiate their income. Gig cultivators can also be independent contractors and freelancers who might be digital content producers and generate income by such activities. On the other hand, 'gig workers' are individuals who engage in temporary employment and are not part of the employer-employee relationship (Press Information Bureau [PIB], 2025a). Their work is contract-based, and payments are typically task- or project-based. For the purposes of this research, the terms 'gig cultivators' and 'gig workers' are used interchangeably to refer to people who participate in the gig economy and generate income from it through online platform-supported work.

Gig work has a long history. Work in the traditional informal sector, such as carpentry, construction-site work, security guard hiring through agencies, hiring workers to do household chores, hiring agricultural labourers for sowing, harvesting or transporting agricultural produce, etc., makes up traditional gig sector work. The modern gig sector works are dominated by platform-based goods and services delivery (Herrmann & Nadarajah, 2023). Technological intermediation is an essential component of such work, and digital gadgets enable such mediation.

Gig work, at an increasing pace, has expanded rapidly in recent years due to the evolution of modern technologies, digital infrastructures, and platformisation of work (Gaurav & Sharma, 2023). The new form of work patterns has brought a challenge to the traditional labour market structure (Sharma & Sharma, 2025). During the period of 2019 to 2025, the Central Government has taken multiple steps to consolidate various labour laws into four codes in order to simplify the labour laws and expand workers' welfare (PIB, 2025b). These codes have recently been implemented in India. The discussions around the impact of their implementation are multidimensional, with the positives and the negatives associated with it.

Methodology

This is a thematic review paper, where a number of secondary literature sources have been reviewed in order to interpret the possible impact of the new labour laws on gig sector workers and gig cultivators. For the purpose of writing this review paper, the law documents and their various interpretations by different scholars, research articles, newspaper articles, policy documents, websites and blogs, etc., are thematically reviewed. The terms 'gig workers' and 'gig cultivators' are used interchangeably in this paper.

The New Labour Laws: An Introduction

There were several labour laws in the past that were focused on the workers' welfare in different sectors of the economy. The central government, with the motto to advance the better understanding and their implementation, tried to consolidate the already existing labour laws into four different codes in recent years. These codes have been framed with the objectives of making labour laws simple, modern, and technology-enabled and to reduce the burden of compliance with multiple laws; bringing flexibility

to industries and workers, and providing social security benefits to gig cultivators and other informal sector workers extensively spread across the economic sectors in India. The formulation of these labour codes has been thought of as an important step towards providing an impetus to employment generation, consolidation of payment and security standards, and strengthening labour rights.

The Code on Wages, 2020

The Code on Wages, 2020, has been formulated in order to make the labour-related and payment-related procedures simpler and uniform. It will also ensure that there would be a minimum wage for all labourers, and the timely payment of wages would be ensured (Ministry of Labour and Employment, 2019). Earlier, there were four different labour-related laws that had different definitions and complex procedures. The Code on Wages, 2020, has unified them into a single law by replacing the earlier labour-related laws.

In the Code on Wages, 2020, for the first time, all labourers have been provided with the minimum wage right, which was earlier limited to special industries only. A framework for a national floor wage has also been established. States will have to fix their rates according to this standard. Moreover, equal pay for equal work has been advocated, and any discrimination based on gender in wages has been prohibited. A time frame has also been established for the payment of wages, and the modalities have been made clearer. There is also a provision for the bonus in this unified law framework (CGS Publication India, 2025).

The code will strengthen wage security for the unorganised sectors, gig cultivators, and temporary labourers. The differences between the states will also be reduced because of this unified code. However, the decision on the minimum wages is dependent on the notifications issued by the respective states. It will also be challenging to implement this provision directly on task-based work and digital gig-based work.

The Industrial Relations Code, 2020

The major objective of the Industrial Relations Code, 2020, is to make a balance between employers' and labourers' relationships. It is also to make the solution to any conflict simpler and to provide flexibility to industries to create more employment opportunities. The major subjects that are considered under this code are providing recognition to trade unions, conflict resolution, and provisions related to strikes, retrenchment, closure, etc. The code recommended a central trade union on the basis of majority; an establishment with less than 300 workers will now have to take fewer permissions from government authorities, which was earlier an establishment with less than a hundred workers. A mandatory notice period of 14 days to the establishments before going on a strike has been included in this code. The provisions for the expansion of industrial tribunals and a detailed process for dispute resolution have also been laid down (Ministry of Law and Justice, 2020a).

The law will help in expanding industries and their production capacities, generating employment opportunities, and increasing their share in boosting the economy. The time lag in dispute resolution will also be reduced, and speedy resolutions will happen in light of the availability of proper frameworks and procedures (Vijaivergia & Singh, 2023). However, concerns surround the law around weakening the status of labour unions and their power for collective bargaining and reductions in available measures for workers' protection. Gig cultivators and platform

workers are also not getting any traditional labour rights (available to workers in traditional jobs) directly through this law (Thengadi, n.d.). In the changing work patterns, these are some important challenges that need to be focused upon and included in the new labour laws. Therefore, a balance should be sought by consulting multiple stakeholders in the gig sector such as employers, gig cultivators and platform workers, labour unions, intermediaries, innovators, small-industry entrepreneurs, etc.

The Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020

The 'Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020' has advocated for safe, hygienic and standard work conditions for all labourers, especially in dangerous establishments, construction and mining industries, for people involved in logistics, migration and transportation works, etc. (Ministry of Law and Justice, 2020b). The law has consolidated around 13 old laws on occupational safety, health and working conditions that were earlier prevailing (PIB, 2025c). This has also enabled a single licensing system and single registration process in place of the multiple licences that earlier establishments had to get (PIB, 2025d). Taking lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic, this law has expanded the definition of migrant workers and included portable social security benefits and travel allowances for interstate migrant workers. The definition of working hours and overtime work has been reconsidered, and women were allowed to work night shifts with proper security measures (Anhad Law, 2024). Transparency is promoted in matters of security and accident reporting.

This law focuses on improving the workers' safety and health standards while also considering the issue of migrant workers and construction-site workers. Digitisation of workers' data and keeping a record of it for preparing welfare measures for them is also an important provision in this law. However, this law does not apply directly to the decentralised nature of work in the gig sector and the platform economy. The effectiveness of this law depends upon the measures that will be taken for proper implementation, inspection and enforcement of the regulations made under this law.

The Code on Social Security, 2020

The 'Code on Social Security, 2020' has tried to include all the workers from formal, informal, and gig sectors and/or platform-based work, etc., under the social security benefit schemes, such as the insurance coverage provided to them, the pension benefits, maternity benefits, health and accidental coverage benefits, etc. The most important feature of this law is that it has formally adopted a legal definition of 'gig worker' and 'platform worker'. The law defines 'gig worker' as 'the person who performs work or participates in a work arrangement and earns from such activities outside of a traditional employer-employee relationship'. This code also defines 'platform work' as 'a work arrangement outside of a traditional employer-employee relationship in which organisations or individuals use an online platform to access other organisations or individuals to solve specific problems or to provide specific services or any such other activities which may be notified by the Central Government, in exchange for payment'. Similarly, according to the code, a 'platform worker' is 'a person engaged in or undertaking platform work' (Ministry of Law and Justice, 2020c).

The law also provides guidelines for the establishment of national and state social security boards. It has also recommended a specialised platform as a 'Social Security Fund', where the platform companies will contribute for the welfare of the gig cultivators. There is a possibility of expansion of benefits under provident fund (PF),

employees' state insurance (ESI), gratuity, etc., and other related social security benefits (PIB, 2025e). In order to keep a record of the unorganised sector workers and to formulate welfare policies and measures, a national database has been recommended, and based on that, the e-SHRAM Portal has been created (PIB, 2025f). The possible advantages that this law will bring are that accidental insurance and schemes for the safety of lives at work will be provided to the informal sector workers as well. Gig cultivators, delivery persons, taxi drivers and ride-hailing captains, freelancers, and other independent workers who were earlier not recognised by any law have now been identified legally by this law, and the social security benefits will be extended to them. However, despite these pathbreaking provisions, some challenges are still ahead. When and how these benefits will be enforced is not very clear, and also the criteria for beneficiaries and distribution systems are not very robust and cannot handle this vast amount of data from the ever-expanding platform economy.

The new rules and regulations to implement all these four labour laws have been in place and enforced very recently in November 2025. However, their practical enforcement and impact on the gig sector are still in progress. Therefore, the evaluation of the impact of these laws on the day-to-day lives of gig workers is a matter of future research. However, a brief overview and the potential impact of these labour laws on the platform economy and the gig cultivators can be given based on the various interpretations of the scholars, government notifications, provisions in these codes and their comprehensive reviews.

Impact of New Labour Laws on Gig Cultivators: Possibilities and Limitations

Recognition of gig workers in recently implemented labour laws is an empowering step in the direction of opening and expanding the social security programmes to a large section of people who are involved in informal sectors. New labour laws also propose national and state-level boards and funding mechanisms, which will further expand the systematic social security framework (The Financial Express, 2025). Some representatives of gig workers and companies welcomed the initiative to add platform workers to social security initiatives. However, they have also shown their concerns regarding any behavioural change in security measures and time-bound rule implementation (Ganguly & Kothari, 2025). According to Nair and Jigeesh (2025), many trade unions called these newly enforced laws 'anti-worker' and 'pro-employer'. The central government has defined it as a historic step that will protect the interests of gig workers.

The Code on Wages, 2019, ensures a minimum salary to all workers, whether they are employed in traditional jobs, informal jobs, or gig work (Srivastava, 2022; CGS Publication India, 2025). Because of this initiative, there is hope to get minimum income to those gig cultivators who are working in the platform economy, such as Zomato, Swiggy, Uber, Ola, or Urban Company, etc., as drivers or delivery partners. The code also enables the mandatory provision of providing the timely payment to gig cultivators in all sectors of the platform economy. For all workers, whether male or female, there is a provision that they will be paid equal remuneration for equal work, according to this code (Ministry of Law and Justice, 2019). Female gig cultivators, like women food and essentials delivery persons, women beauticians taking online bookings, women in the professional service provider sectors, female two-wheeler or cab drivers, etc., in the gig sectors will benefit because of this provision. Besides this, there is also a provision for deciding a 'national floor wage', by which a minimum pay

at the national level will be decided. This will be helpful in tackling the disparities that exist in different states in minimum wages (Singh & Choudhary, 2020/2025), and the workers in the platform economy will be provided with a guarantee of standard minimum pay (Bhattacharjee, 2020).

However, the Code on Wages, 2019, does not define gig workers as a separate working population (Ministry of Law and Justice, 2019). The platform companies can take advantage of this loophole in the law and declare the gig cultivators who are working on their platforms as partners or independent contractors and cannot provide them the benefits that this law ensures. Further, the work that is based on the platform economy is generally project-by-project, where payment for each completed task is made to the gig worker. Therefore, it will also be difficult to implement the provisions of minimum wages for gig workers, despite the law in place, as in times of low demand for goods and services online, the gig cultivators may not get enough tasks to execute. In such a scenario, the actual wages to gig cultivators may be lower than the minimum wages promised by this law. Further speaking, since the work in the platform economy is based on digital gadgets and the internet, after taking the online orders, the gig cultivator has to be on the move in order to deliver the requested goods or services to the clients. Therefore, it would be difficult to monitor the work or the workers in the case of a platform economy, which will make implementing the provisions of this law also difficult. Moreover, if the provisions of minimum wages and timely payment to workers are implemented, there is the possibility that the platform companies will shift these burdens either on the consumers or the gig cultivators by increasing their own commission, increasing the prices of the goods and services provided through the platforms, or by reducing the incentives provided to the workers. Also, there is a risk of a long delay in the case of the legal recourse that workers take if the benefits promised to them through these provisions are unmet and their grievances are not settled internally and/or the required steps will not be taken in that direction by the companies (Miguel, 2023). The options of legal recourse and the route of labour courts are not only time-consuming but also expensive. Therefore, many gig cultivators might not be able to take the legal route.

The Industrial Relations Code, 2020, opens a door for facilitating a grievance redressal system. The provisions in the code stress settling for a 'grievance redressal mechanism' that can be helpful for the gig cultivators if they are provided the status of the workers (Thengadi, n.d.). This will increase the possibility of getting the gig cultivators' grievances addressed in relation to payment discrepancies, unfair termination of the gig workers, the app-based punishment system, etc., in a timely and effective manner. The code also provides legal recognition to the formation of trade unions and their rights (Ministry of Law and Justice, 2020a). This may foster a sense of collective belonging among gig cultivators and put forth their collective demand for better working conditions and fair remuneration at work. For example, the union of cab drivers and the union of delivery drivers are asking for better wages and working environments in India in recent times and are also holding protests and strikes to build pressure on the authorities to accept their demands. Furthermore, the Industrial Relations Code 2020 has also tried to make a balance between the government, workers, and the platforms. By clearly acknowledging the government's role in labour-related disputes (Prakash, 2021), the one-sided edge that the platform companies' policies receive will be checked.

However, there is a lack of a clear definition of gig cultivators and platform workers in the Industrial Relations Code, 2020 (Saraswat & Mukherjee, 2023), which will make it

difficult for them to get the benefits directly under the provisions of protection of trade unions, their rights for collective bargaining, rights for strikes, or the dispute resolution system (Luthra, 2024). Going a step forward, the code has also made it difficult to protest collectively and go on strike, as it requires a 14-day mandatory notice to be served to the platforms if the workers are willing to go on strike. This will weaken their collective power for resistance and bargaining potential, as these platform workers often come together informally to advance their collective grievances. This code has also provided some of the provisions related to termination and temporary suspension of workers in favour of big companies and industries, as now there is no need to get permission from the government to carry out retrenchments or layoffs for the companies that have less than 300 employees (earlier the threshold was 100 employers) (Thengadi, n.d.; PIB, 2025g). This code also does not guarantee any minimum wage to gig workers (The Hindu Bureau, 2025). This will deteriorate the position of workers in the companies and negatively affect the rights of the gig workers. As the gig economy is rising continuously, in the future, the platform companies will make use of these loopholes, which can severely impact the stability of work in the gig sectors and hamper economic growth. Besides these lacunae present in the code, this law also does not address issues related to the management of algorithmic control over the gig workers, the assignment of tasks to them, the app-based rating system and the added advantage with it, or the haphazard reduction in the incentives of the gig cultivators. Hence, there is a possibility that arbitrary decisions taken by algorithms will continue. The provisions in the Industrial Relations Code 2020 appear to be tilted more towards the industries and companies. The investment and ease of doing business have been prioritised in this code (PIB, 2025g), while the issues of labour security and workers' rights have been made secondary (Kumar, 2025). This will further deteriorate the position of gig cultivators in India.

The Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020, is a major step in the direction of ensuring safety at the workplace. This code has provisions to strengthen health and safety standards at the workplace (PIB, 2025c). If the gig cultivators get the status of workers, they will benefit from this law, as they will be provided accidental security coverage, first-aid treatment in hospitals and facilities that promote safe work environments. Women gig workers will especially benefit from this law, as addressing security concerns is one of the major focuses of this law. This law allows women to work in all shifts if adequate security is available for them (Anhad Law, 2024). Because of these provisions, the participation of women in works related to the delivery of goods and services, cab driving services, home services, etc., will show an increasing trend. This law is also focusing on housing, sanitation and basic amenities at the workplace. Though this will not directly influence gig cultivators' lives (Saraswat & Mukherjee, 2023), this will provide a reference model for the future policy makers to include such amenities for gig workers as well. There is latent support, and security arrangements exist in the code for contractors and workers of the gig sectors, as this law has made an attempt to strengthen the security measures for workers in the informal economy (Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas [CAM], 2020).

However, there are lacunae in the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020. This law does not directly talk about gig and platform-based workers, nor does it classify them in the workers category (Saraswat & Mukherjee, 2023). Therefore, they will not be able to directly claim and avail themselves of safeguards such as accidental insurance coverage, healthcare facilities, safety at the workplace, or legally sanctioned work hours. The law also does not mention any regulatory provisions for the working

conditions of platform-based services. The safety and security risks, such as road accidents, delays due to bad weather conditions, long-distance transportation or rides, or tiredness-related issues of the gig cultivators, etc., have not been addressed through this law. The gig cultivators work on the 'per order-based' model (DW Shift, 2025). This law does not directly talk about the 'working hours' for these workers, nor specifically mention 'rest hours' for them. Working overtime, the mental stress of work and related health concerns will then continue for the platform workers in the wake of the non-availability of any such safety provisions. Further, though accident insurance and emergency medical facilities for the workers of the informal economy have been included in the code (Ministry of Law and Justice, 2020b), there is no clarity on whether the gig cultivators working on the platform economy will be part of it or not, and therefore a risk of exclusion for them exists, as their employers or platforms are not legally approved and included in this law (Saraswat & Mukherjee, 2023; Yazbi & Kumar, 2025). There is also a lack of regulation for algorithmic management as well, and the system of rating economy as pushed forward by the platforms, deductions in incentives for the gig cultivators, automatic suspension of workers' registration on the platforms, punishment scoring, etc., are not monitored. These challenges make the work conditions for gig cultivators insecure, unstable, and unsustainable.

The Code on Social Security, 2020, provides, most importantly, legal recognition to gig and platform workers (Ministry of Law and Justice, 2020c; PIB, 2025a/2025e). They have been defined categorically as workers in this law, which is a historical step forward in including them under the net of social security benefits. To constitute a dedicated 'social security fund' has also been proposed in this law, in which the platform companies and digital aggregators will have to contribute between 1 and 2 per cent of their yearly turnover, as notified by the government (Ministry of Law and Justice, 2020c; V. V. Giri National Labour Institute [VVGNI], n.d.). This will directly benefit the online gig cultivators and platform workers. A national database system was launched for registration of workers employed in informal sectors and gig cultivators by the Ministry of Labour and Employment in 2021, which is called the e-SHRAM portal (PIB, 2025f). This will provide the gig cultivators with a worker's identity and make their reach easier to pension schemes, insurance benefits, and other welfare measures taken for them. The Code on Social Security, 2020, also provides the possibility of extending the provisions of social security and insurance coverage due to accidents, health and safety benefits, maternity relief, old age, unemployment, work injury, etc. (Ministry of Law and Justice, 2020c), which is significant for cab drivers, riders, and delivery partners who struggle with tiredness, road accidents, bodily pain, or any related challenges. The code has given a ray of hope for extending pension provisions in the future for platform workers, which may ensure their economic security in their old age. This law also provides for extending Employees' Provident Fund (EPF), Employees' State Insurance (ESI) Fund, and other welfare schemes to gig cultivators (Ministry of Law and Justice, 2020c).

However, the ambiguity in some of the provisions and the lack of a clearly defined timeline to implement these provisions will make it difficult to translate the benefits into reality from the policy document. The code is also ambiguous about the contributions that will be made by the workers and the platform companies (Vinayaka K, 2025), which can be exploited by the companies in their favour by putting the extra burden on gig cultivators. The law has recently come into force, but when the actual implementation of these provisions will happen is not clear, as many of the states have not yet taken any significant initiative in this direction (Mondal, 2025; Vinayaka K,

2025). Therefore, to materialise the provisions under this law into benefits may take further time. Moreover, the provisions for future benefits are also not legally ensured but rather depend on the schemes and initiatives that will be made from time to time by the government and platform companies. This reduces the possibilities of sharing benefits with the workers, and they may only be partially shared. There can also be inequality in the benefit sharing, as it is not explicitly mentioned in the law, and companies have to decide about it through their initiatives and welfare measures. The provisions for effective systems for monitoring the implementation of this law, control and regulation over the platform companies, and grievance redressal mechanisms for workers are also not clearly laid down and included in the law. Also, an overemphasis has been put on the workers' registration (PIB, 2025f), as the benefits of the schemes will only be provided to them if they are registered workers. However, due to the nature of the work in the platform economy and low digital literacy among gig cultivators (India Today Research Bureau, 2024; Ou, 2025), the rate of registration of the workers may stand low.

Towards Inclusive Labour Codes: Gig-Sensitive Laws and a Way Forward

In order to make the new labour codes that were recently implemented in India more inclusive for gig cultivators and platform workers in the informal sectors, a clearer, standard, and practical definition of 'gig worker' and 'platform worker' is needed (PSR Legislative Research, n.d.a). There is also a need to clarify under what conditions the platforms will be called employers or partners in a gig-based work model. Ambiguous definitions of 'gig worker' and 'platform worker' give companies undue leverage to declare gig workers as self-employed and thus evade the companies of the responsibilities that they should bear towards the gig worker. Therefore, a clear and standard definition will help in better implementation of the provisions under the law and safeguard the rights of the workers and the benefits available to them under these provisions.

There should also be clear provisions regarding the contribution that the platform companies have to make under the Social Security Code, 2020 (PSR Legislative Research, n.d.a). For example, the contributions will be a per-transaction cess or a fixed percentage of the business turnover should be clearly defined. Moreover, transparent reporting of the contributions made by the companies should be in the public domain and be compulsorily updated. This is required, as the social security fund needs regular and permanent financial resource support, and any discrepancies or irregularities will disturb the activities undertaken for the welfare of gig workers. Therefore, clarity on the source of funding and how much share the stakeholders have to give to the Social Security Fund will ensure that the welfare provisions made for the gig cultivators and platform workers will come into effect efficiently, and there will be no discontinuance of benefits or haphazard removal of beneficiaries.

Under the provisions of minimum wages, there should be an average standard income for all the gig workers based on the minimum earning model, which is either per hour or per day or per week or based on the per-task-to-hour convertibility formula. It is very difficult to implement the minimum wage provisions in a task-based payment model. Therefore, a standard conversion formula for per-task-to-hour will provide gig cultivators clarity for the minimum working hours schedule for earning an average minimum wage, while also providing them the benefits of minimum wage security. A standard measurable

wage norm will facilitate the conversion of extra work hours into extra income for the gig cultivators.

The social security benefits need to be portable (Bhattacharyya & Jha, 2021), as the gig workers are not attached to a single platform but are working over multiple platforms. Portability of social security benefits, like insurance provisions, pension schemes, maternity benefits, etc., will be added and provide cumulative benefits to gig cultivators. Even if they change the platform where they work, the benefits that have already accumulated will get transferred in their name to other platforms. Therefore, the social security benefits should not be attached to the platforms that gig cultivators work on; rather, they should be attached to the workers who are working gigs. The e-Shram portal launched for the purpose of registration of gig workers will play a very significant role here in keeping the record of the workers and the accumulated benefits. The portal can also enable and assist the portability of these benefits from one platform to another platform if the benefits are directly attached to the workers. Therefore, the portability of social security benefits will ensure that the gig cultivators and platform workers will get this support regularly, and the financial crisis that they encounter in the initial stage of working or in times of layoffs will be tackled.

In matters of algorithmic management and its control over the work schedule of gig cultivators and platform workers, more transparency is required. Platform algorithms decide the demand and allotment of tasks to gig workers, their rankings (which may or may not be based on the ratings received by customers), suspension, and penalties imposed on the gig cultivators (Anush S, 2025). Therefore, transparency is needed in matters of how these algorithms work. A standard due process should also be adopted in order to tackle the mismanagement of work schedules and haphazard algorithmic control. Besides this, providing notice to the gig workers before taking action and equipping them with the facility to appeal against the action taken against them should also be made mandatory. This will fix the accountability of the platforms and prevent the misuse of the power inherent within them. It will also open a formal path to prevent gig cultivators and platform workers from unjustified punishments given to them based on algorithmic decisions. The provisions for auditing the logs of the platform should be included in the laws meant for regulating platform-based work. The third-party audit requirements should be in place in order to avoid any discrepancies in fixing accountability.

In the Industrial Relations Code, 2020, there should be provisions for virtual unions or the negotiating councils for gig cultivators and platform workers, which include a window for online registration, a representative model, and multiple employee-employer dialogues. This is required because the traditional model of workers' unions is not suitable for people working gigs (PSR Legislative Research, n.d.b), as they are spatially distributed over larger geographies, and their chances of getting into a physical proximity and forming a group are very rare. The possibility of virtual union formation can provide them with flexible representation through which they can take part in collective bargaining with the intermediate platforms or their employers.

The labour inspection system should be strengthened, digitalised and made transparent, where data regarding ride and delivery logs, average income of workers, their complaints and suggestions, etc., can be made available through dedicated digital desks and the status of progress is reflected on it. The traditional system of physical inspection cannot be efficient for gig-based work models, as the gig workers are not stationary, and they work while they are on wheels. Therefore, a data-based inspection system would be efficient, quick, and easy to carry. Random audits and regulatory dashboards should also be

incorporated within the inspection system of platform-based work (Surender & Varrsha, 2024).

To address the grievances of gig cultivators and platform workers, special labour tribunals need to be formed for fast-track proceedings and judgments. The execution of court orders and tribunal decisions should also happen in a time-bound manner in order to bring efficiency and develop trust among gig workers that can motivate them to go for legal remedies for their grievances (Rajkhowa, 2024). Long pending cases, adjournments, and delays in arriving at a decision are not effective for gig workers as they bring hardships, especially related to economic crisis and mental trauma, to the working-class people and demotivate them from taking the route of legal remedies.

The provisions regarding basic and emergency health facilities and accident coverage under the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020, should also be extended to gig cultivators and platform workers (Ministry of Law and Justice, 2020b). A time-to-time advisory regarding medical health check-ups for people working gigs, facilities for monitoring their tiredness, and fitness of gig cultivators should be taken care of. As the ride-hailing and delivery services involve constant movement and transportation, the danger of meeting with an accident is great. Real security will be provided only if there is accident coverage and insurance in place and the provisions under this code are formally adopted and efficiently implemented for these gig workers.

It is imperative that the provisions under these labour laws be implemented in pilot mode in different cities or states, and then an impact evaluation be carried out. Based on the results, the changes should be carried out in these provisions and then implemented at the national level (PSR Legislative Research, n.d.c). The pilot projects will help to understand the ground realities of the implementation of these labour codes and help in tackling any unfavourable and harmful impact of them. There is a need for public surveillance over the provisions of these codes, and academic evaluation is critical in finding the gaps either in achieving the welfare objectives or distractions in implementational procedures.

The focus of government policies should be on increasing digital literacy among gig workers. Paid training programmes should be organised for gig workers to equip them with digital skills and to instil confidence among them. This will prepare them for future-ready work while also not bringing economic loss to them when they participate in these training programmes and does not put them in economic hardship while acquiring the skills. Welfare benefits will reach the workers only when they are registered and able to understand the process of digital insurance, pension schemes, etc. Therefore, it is required that the portals which offer such services, such as e-Shram and other related portals, be equipped with local languages and that the process of registration be made clear and easy (PSR Legislative Research, n.d.a). Offline assistance, customer service centres, mobile help desks and support centres can play a crucial role in democratising the process of registration for gig workers. Investments should also be focused on spreading information regarding welfare measures and initiatives taken for the gig workers so that they cannot be left out in the wake of non-availability of information.

The need for legal help and labour educational programmes is critical in times when workers are mostly employed in informal sectors. Free legal help clinics, labour education workshops, and employment help desks should be initiated for gig workers so that not only do they know about their rights, but also how to acquire them and when to use them (Bhattacharyya & Jha, 2021). It is equally important to understand

the role the rights given to them can play in their lives and when there is a breach in their rights so that they can seek timely intervention.

There should be well-defined privacy rules for gig cultivators, consumers and the intermediaries. In the age of data misuse and growing concerns over one's privacy, how the collected data of the gig workers and consumers by the platforms will be used, who has the right to store it and what security measures are in place to protect the privacy of workers and consumers should be clearly defined. Accountability should be fixed for the platforms, intermediaries and employers in case of data breaches and illegal and unethical data transactions. The stored data should also be made available for the gig cultivators for claiming their social security benefits (Surender & Varrsha, 2024). Therefore, robust data regulation policies are the need of the hour that can ensure regular and timely audits and efficient distribution of benefits to the registered beneficiaries.

Policies and programmes should include the viewpoints of multiple stakeholders in the gig sector in order to make them inclusive (Anush S, 2025). Rules should be framed in consultation with representatives from the Union Government, state governments, platforms, labour representatives and unions, experts in the sectors, and research and academic institutions. From time to time, consultation with experts and intelligentsia should be done, and review meetings should be organised and made mandatory. Multiple stakeholders' points of view will ensure inclusion of diverse interests of different groups. This will reduce the dissatisfaction among these groups, and that will help in better implementation of these policies.

Therefore, a balance between the economic interests of platform companies and platform workers is needed. The operational, institutional, digital and algorithmic structures of the new labour codes and the welfare objectives, such as labour security, social security, flexibility of work, etc., of these codes should be regularly reviewed so that a balanced, realistic and beneficial implementation will be made possible. For the successful and efficient implementation of these codes, it is very important that there are clear definitions, fixed platforms' accountability, mechanisms for data-enabled enforcement of the provisions, guidelines for portability of benefits that have been provided to give cultivators, and gig-centred collective representations are employed in the codes. Conceptual and definitional gaps and the ambiguity centred around the employer-employee relationship will only make these labour codes hard to implement in a real sense. Data transparency, workers' rights, systemic and effective regulatory provisions, and labour inspection mechanisms will promote confidence among the gig cultivators and platform workers, and therefore, further boost the gig sectors.

Conclusion

The four new labour laws – 'The Code on Wages, 2019', 'The Industrial Relations Code, 2020', 'The Code on Social Security, 2020', and 'The Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020' – were recently implemented in India. These laws open the door to labour rights, payment security, and opportunities for social welfare for gig cultivators and platform workers. However, the limitations in their scope and the challenges that stand in their implementation are also visible. The Code on Wages, 2019, provides hope for economic security to gig cultivators by including the provisions of minimum wages and timely payment of wages, whereas the Code on Social Security, 2020, provides them with workers' identity and prepares a framework for extending social security benefits such as insurance, pension, and a

dedicated fund for them. On the other hand, the Industrial Relations Code, 2020, expands the horizon for dispute resolution and creating collective organisations. However, in the wake of the lack of clarity on workers' category for the gig cultivators, they may not get the benefits of these provisions directly. Likewise, the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020, though it provides a legal framework for a secure and safe work environment, the non-inclusion of platform-based risks and digital work models limits the larger effects of the code for gig cultivators.

Therefore, the four new labour laws in India play a very pivotal role in establishing the need for policy formulation in the areas of workers' security and regulations for platform-based work in the gig economy. However, the actual benefits of these laws will only be transferred to gig cultivators and platform workers if they are legally recognised as workers, a transparent system of accountability is in place for the platform companies, and an effective implementation of all the provisions is ensured that will also be reflected in the behavioural changes.

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