

Concept Note

Shaping the Future of Work: Strengthening Protections for Gig and Platform Workers in India

In July of 2024, the Karnataka Government released to the public for comments ‘The Karnataka Platform Based Gig Workers (Social Security and Welfare) Bill’, a draft legislation intended to regulate working conditions of gig and platform workers across the state. With the introduction of this bill, Karnataka became the third state in the country after Rajasthan and Jharkhand to legislate on matters concerning gig and platform workers rights. Since then, states including Kerala and Telangana, have expressed their intention to introduce comparable laws. Additionally, the central government has recently appointed a committee to explore extending social security and welfare benefits for gig and platform workers nationwide.

This surge in legislative efforts is significant, especially as gig and platform work becomes a dominant source of livelihood for many in India's workforce. As per a 2022 Niti Aayog report, gig and platform workers are likely to expand to over 23.5 million by 2029-30. While platform work has emerged as a dominant alternative to traditional work, it is also plagued by precarious working conditions including in relation to pay, hours of work, freedom of association and new challenges such as algorithmic and AI-related discrimination engendered by specific nature of platform work.

In this context, recent government efforts to regulate this sector are a welcome development. However, there has been limited in-depth analysis of the scope, content, or practical benefits of these different legal frameworks for workers. Furthermore, public discussions on what constitutes ideal worker protections for gig and platform workers in India—especially in comparison to evolving international standards and recent developments in Europe—have been lacking.

To address these gaps, the Center for Labour Studies (**CLS**) at NLSIU is organizing a day-long seminar at its campus. The event will feature panel discussions exploring various aspects of gig and platform work, with the aim of collaboratively developing recommendations for stronger labour protections. With many of the proposed laws still in draft form, CLS hopes that the insights and recommendations from the seminar will prove beneficial for gig and platform workers, their unions, and civil society organizations advocating for stronger and more effective worker protections in their states and with the central government.