LABOUR IN THE PLATFORM BASED GIG ECONOMY: THEORY, SURVEY FINDINGS, CHALLENGES & RECOMMENDATION

by

Om Chauhan

B.A.LL.B at School of Law and Governance, Central University of South Bihar, Gaya, Bihar, India. Founder & CEO, LawBRO.

Email: omvrindavan2005@gmail.com.
ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0009-0004-3249-8218
&

Mayank Kumar Mishra

B.A.LL.B at School of Law and Governance, Central University of South Bihar, Gaya, Bihar, India.
Email: mayankmishra1209@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The fast growth of gig economy in India, especially in the sector of quick commerce led to the watershed moment, where the nature of work has been permanently changed as it incorporates time-bound, platform-based, and algorithmic management of labour. Quick Commerce Delivery (QCD), gig workers being independent contractors becomes vulnerable as they lack formal employer-employee relationship and therefore making them with no access to social security. The digital platform provides flexibility and employment creation on the one hand and on the other hand, they pose problems such as unstable incomes, occupational safety and labour rights issues. The Code on Social Security, 2020 is a legal act that recognizes gig and platform workers, but there are no enforceable rules for the protection of these workers. The goal of this paper is to study the evolving legal framework, constitutional principles, and policy instrument addressing these disparities,

with reference to the Code on Social Security, 2020, Bihar Platform Based Gig Workers Act, 2025 and empirical data on Gig workers.

Keywords: Gig Economy; Platform Work; Quick-Commerce Delivery Workers; Algorithmic Management; Labour Rights

1. Introduction

Growth in the gig economy has played a crucial role in changing the nature of work in India. The rapid growth in the quick commerce space, which involves deliveries in extremely short time periods, has increased the significance of Quick-Commerce delivery (QCD) workers, who are termed as independent contractors and are regulated by digital platforms and algorithms. Quick-Commerce Delivery workers are workers who are time-bound, platform-regulated and algorithmically managed individuals engaged in rapid, on-demand delivery services through digital applications.. QCD workers work through the medium of platform apps and undertake tasks in real time, where they are tracked and scheduled through the app's systems, focusing more on speed and efficiency over conventional employment. Flexibility and employment creation through QCD platforms are positive aspects of these platforms, but there are major concerns associated with income stability, working conditions, and access to labour rights. QCD platforms have emerged as digital and app-based systems that regulate, schedule, and monitor time-bound delivery tasks through algorithms.

The scale of this transformation is substantial. India's quick commerce sector achieved a gross order value of approximately ₹64,000 crore (approximately USD 7.6 billion) in the financial year 2024-25, representing more than a twofold increase compared with the preceding year. The sector has experienced a compound annual growth rate of over 70 per cent between 2020 and 2024, driven by expanding dark-store networks and surging consumer demand in urban markets.[1] This exponential commercial growth has been

[1] 'India Quick Commerce Report 2026: Market to Reach $12.97 Billion by 2029' (GlobeNewswire, 20 April 2026) <https://finance.yahoo.com/markets/stocks/articles/india-quick-commerce-report-2026-

accompanied by a proportionate increase in the demand for QCD workers, making the question of their legal protection one of pressing national importance.

Gig Economy has been described as an instance of "platform-mediated labor," where traditional employment relations are substituted by digitally mediated employment arrangements.[2] QCD Workers earn unstable incomes, lack social security measures, and are vulnerable to occupational hazards because of the pressure of meeting tight delivery goals. Even though they play a critical role in maintaining platform services, they are not treated as regular employees and are thus deprived of various legal rights. Platform-based employment indicates a tendency towards on-demand work, where employment flexibility is usually connected with employment insecurity.[3] Despite the fact that the Code on Social Security of 2020 includes gig and platform workers among those who need protection, it lacks sufficient provisions for ensuring it.

International Labour Organization (2021) states that digital labour platforms are typically outside the scope of existing regulatory structures and this presents some difficulties in the provision of decent conditions and social protection for workers.[4] There is an amount of existing research on the topics of economic precariousness, algorithmic control and changing nature of platform work. Nevertheless, there is still no empirical legal research that considers the problem of incorporating the real-life experience of workers with the adequacy of existing legal framework. The present research aims to fill this gap in the literature.

2. Research Inquiries (Research Questions)

This study is guided by the following key research inquiries:

153500619.html> accessed 6 September 2026; 'Gig Economy: Balancing Growth with Worker Protection' (Drishti IAS, 2 January 2026) <https://www.drishtiias.com/current-affairs-news-analysis-editorials/news-editorials/02-01-2026/print/manual> accessed 6 September 2026.

[2] *The Gig Economy in India* (2024) <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003491705>.

[3] V De Stefano, 'The rise of the "just-in-time workforce": On-demand work, crowdwork, and labour protection in the gig economy' (2016) 37 Comp Lab L & Pol'y J 471.

[4] International Labour Organization, *World Employment and Social Outlook 2021: The Role of Digital Labour Platforms in Transforming the World of Work* (ILO 2021).

1. What are the main economic and work condition issues for quick-commerce gig workers?
2. How much influence do platform systems such as algorithms and ratings have on the autonomy and security of the workers?
3. How effective is the current legal system in India with regard to gig workers' welfare?

3. Research Objectives

The main objectives of this study are:

1. To analyze the essence of work in the QPD gig economy.
2. To highlight the legal circumvents that hinder the protection of gig workers' rights.
3. To propose practical and legal recommendations for the welfare of QCD workers.

4. Research Methodology

This study adopts a mixed-method approach, combining both doctrinal and empirical research. The doctrinal analysis is based on statutes, committee reports, government publications, and existing research articles to examine the legal framework governing gig workers in India. In addition, empirical data has been collected through a structured survey of 40 quick-commerce delivery workers from tier 3 city of India to understand their lived experiences regarding income, working conditions, and platform practices. The data has been analyzed using a qualitative and descriptive method, enabling a comparison between existing legal provisions and actual ground realities.

5. Literature Review

The gig economy in India, specifically its quick-commerce and platform-based sectors, is a complex terrain that poses both advantages and disadvantages to the workers. With the rapid rise of this economy, supported by platforms like Blinkit, Instamart, Swiggy, and Zomato, flexible employment options have been provided to the workers while at the same time subjecting them to precarious working environments owing to the presence of algorithmic management and poor legal protection.[5] In spite of all the rapid growth in the industry, employment options have been made available to millions of young people, migrants, and people displaced from other industries.[6] However, with the rapid rise comes the exposure to precarious work environment due to poor labor regulations, with predictions showing that India's gig workforce might grow up to 23.5 million by 2029-2030.[7] Gig workers are categorized as independent contractors rather than employees by platforms and thus denied basic rights including minimum wages, job security, and healthcare insurance.[8] In doing so, corporations try to minimize their liability and increase the risk to the workers.[9] Such actions make the already vulnerable gig workers even more exposed considering that a majority of Indians already belong to poor socio-economic status.[10]

Nevertheless, in many cases, the employment relations in the gig economy, despite improving the consumer experience, restrict the worker's freedom and aggravate labor precarity, as is the case with food delivery and e-commerce industries with the use of AI technologies.[11] India's legal regulation is unable to follow the growth of this industry leaving huge gaps in worker protection.[12] The Code on Social Security from 2020 is aimed at solving some of the issues; however, the majority of the gig workers are not protected

[5] P Kalbalia and K Koushik, 'Regulating the Gig Economy' (2025) 85–106 <https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-9385-7.ch004>.
[6] P Sharma and V K Negi, 'Invisible labour and digital exploitation: a critical legal inquiry into gig work in India' (2025) 7 Intl J Multidisciplinary Research <https://doi.org/10.36948/ijfmr.2025.v07i04.50967>.
[7] R K Rao, K Kumar, R Gupta, S Khurana, K N Verma, S Chandra, R R Singh and O Dharap, *India's Booming Gig and Platform Economy: Perspectives and Recommendations on the Future of Work* (NITI Aayog June 2022) <https://www.niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2022-06/25th_June_Final_Report_27062022.pdf>.
[8] V Pulignano, 'Work and Employment under the Gig Economy' (2019) 12 Partecipazione e Conflitto 629 <https://doi.org/10.1285/I20356609V12I3P629>.
[9] F Haque and A R Dard, 'New face of job quality challenge in India: gig worker studies' (2023) 11 J Indonesian Applied Economics 101 <https://doi.org/10.21776/ub.jiae.2017.011.01.8>.
[10] V Choudhary and S S Shireshi, 'Analysing the Gig Economy in India and Exploring Various Effective Regulatory Methods to Improve the Plight of the Workers' (2022) 57 J Asian & African Studies <https://doi.org/10.1177/00219096221082581>.
[11] M K Pasupuleti, 'The Gig Economy's Role in India's AI-Powered Food and E-Commerce Sectors' (2025) <https://doi.org/10.62311/nesx/rb47>.
[12] 1 J J Pant and M G Majumder, 'Themes and narratives of gig economy: An Indian HR perspective' (2022) 15 NHRD Network J 83 <https://doi.org/10.1177/26314541211064751>.

yet.[13] It is necessary to regulate the aggregator platforms properly, recognize the rights of gig workers, and establish collaboration with the aim of improving their working conditions.[14] With the development of the gig economy, this problem becomes crucial in order to ensure sustainable and equitable labor conditions in India.[15]

6. Empirical Findings and Legal Analysis

Based on the analysis of the results of this study, there appear a number of structural problems concerning the working conditions of gig delivery workers. They are identified in terms of the qualitative and quantitative surveys conducted with the help of 40 gig workers from Gaya, a tier-3 city in India. The results are analyzed from the perspective of constitutional principles and labour laws in India.

6.1 Economic Insecurity and the Right to Livelihood

Income unpredictability and financial instability are commonly identified problems faced by gig workers all over the world.[16] The results of the surveys prove the significant financial instability of the gig workers. Approximately 45% of the respondents stated the inability to predict their monthly income. Also, 75% of them claimed that they were confronted with a sharp decrease in the volume of orders or income from the work on random days. Moreover, 70% of the gig workers stated that the costs of fuel significantly decrease their income per delivery, so the workers themselves have to pay for the operational costs.

These findings resonated with the national picture that emerged at the turn of 2026, when approximately 40,000 delivery workers affiliated with unions including the Indian Federation of App-Based Transport Workers staged a nationwide flash strike on 31 December 2025 and 1 January 2026. Workers demanded fair and transparent wages, an

[13] P Sharma and V K Negi, 'Invisible labour and digital exploitation: a critical legal inquiry into gig work in India' (2025) 7 Intl J Multidisciplinary Research <https://doi.org/10.36948/ijfmr.2025.v07i04.50967>.
[14] M Das, 'Drivers of the "New Age Service Economy": Gig Workers in India' (2025) <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17431773>.
[15] *The Gig Economy in India* (2024) <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003491705>.
[16] J Berg, M Furrer, E Harmon, U Rani and M S Silberman, *Digital Labour Platforms and the Future of Work: Towards Decent Work in the Online World* (ILO 2018).

end to ultra-fast delivery models that compromised safety, and alignment of their compensation with the recently notified labour codes. Surveys conducted during this period indicated that gig workers earned between 10 and 25 per cent less than permanent employees in comparable roles, with many earning below the applicable minimum wage despite working long hours.[17]

The obtained information proves the precarious nature of QCD gig work and the violation of the right to livelihood which includes the right to a decent life as the part of Article 21. The absence of the guarantee of minimum wage and the mechanism of income stabilization leaves the workers in a vulnerable position and makes them assume economic risks without any legal protection. Thus, the classification of QCD workers as the independent contractors is inadequate because of the ability of the platforms to avoid employers' duties.

6.2 Working Conditions, Safety, and Social Security

Platform workers face higher risks related to their occupations because of the time-related pressure.[18] The surveys point out the problems concerning the working conditions and workers' safety, 45% of the surveyed workers stated that they do not get any compensation for working in extreme weather conditions, 47.5% of them stated that the company does not provide any help in case of accidents or damage to vehicles. 47.5% of the workers stated the absence of accident insurance as well.

A particularly significant dimension of this occupational hazard concerns road safety. Because delivery riders are classified as independent contractors rather than employees, their deaths and injuries on the road are not recorded as workplace fatalities, rendering the

[17] '40,000 Gig Workers Launch Flash Strike in India Demanding Fair Pay and Security' (Human Rights Research Centre, 8 January 2026) <https://www.humanrightsresearch.org/post/40-000-gig-workers-launch-flash-strike-in-india-demanding-fair-pay-and-security> accessed 6 September 2026; 'Gig Workers' Strike Exposes the Hard Limits of India's Quick Commerce Model' (*Business Standard*, 1 January 2026) <https://www.business-standard.com/opinion/editorial/gig-workers-strike-exposes-the-hard-limits-of-india-s-quick-commerce-model-126010100961_1.html> accessed 6 September 2026.

[18] B Apouey, A Roulet, I Solal and M Stabile, 'Gig workers during the COVID-19 crisis in France: Financial precarity and mental well-being' (2020) 97 *J Urban Health* 776 <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11524-020-00480-4>.

true human cost of quick commerce largely invisible in official statistics.[19] The gravity of this concern was acknowledged at the highest levels of government when, in early January 2026, the Ministry of Labour directed quick commerce platforms to remove their promises of sub-ten-minute deliveries following sustained worker protests and documented concerns about riders endangering themselves to meet aggressive delivery targets.[20]

The mentioned results raise significant problems in the context of workers' welfare and social security of gig workers. Even though the problem as recognized in the Code on Social Security, 2020, its absence of enforceable protection makes it inefficient. The lack of employer responsibility and the protection system leave the workers exposed to occupational risks contrary to the general principle of creation of humane working conditions.

6.3 Algorithmic Control, Procedural Fairness, and Equality

Rating systems and customers' feedback are the means of indirect management used in platform economies.[21] According to the survey results, there is the extensive control performed by platform companies using the algorithm. Approximately 62.5% of the surveyed stated that they cannot challenge the unfair rating of the customer. Also, the same percentage of people stated that the delays resulting from the external factors such as weather conditions or traffic negatively influence their rating. Also, 42.5% of the surveyed believed that the order allocation system is not transparent, and 52.5% of the respondents stated that they cannot defend their position in the case of account suspension.

The raised information raises significant problems in the light of the procedural fairness and equality as Article 14. Due to the lack of the transparent mechanism and efficient

[19] Saurabh Bhattacharjee, 'India's Gig-Workers Law and the Responsibility to Respect' (*Business and Human Rights Journal Blog*, 24 July 2026) <https://bhrj.blog/2026/07/24/indias-gig-workers-law-and-the-responsibility-to-respect/> accessed 6 September 2026.
[20] '10-Minute Delivery Promise Halted to Protect Gig Workers' (Khurana and Khurana, 14 February 2026) <https://www.khuranaandkhurana.com/10-min-delivery-promise-halted-to-protect-gig-workers> accessed 6 September 2026.
[21] A Gandini, ‘Labour process theory and the gig economy’ (2019) 72 *Human Relations* 1039 <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726718790002>.

grievance redressal system, the decision making process becomes arbitrary, especially in case of influence on income and job continuity. The inability of the workers to challenge the negative actions violates the principles of natural justice including the right to be heard.

7. Legal Framework and Analysis

In this context, the gig and platform-based workers often experience the situation where there is a power asymmetry between digital platforms implementing algorithmic control but not establishing formal employment relationship. Such discrepancy raises the questions about the adequacy of the existing legal framework regulating non-traditional labor in India.

7.1 Statutory Framework

The absence of a traditional employer-employee relationship puts gig workers in the grey area making application of labor laws problematic.[22] It is worth mentioning that the Code on Social Security, 2020 is the landmark reform that has defined "gig worker" [Section 2(35)] and "platform work" [Section 2(60)]. Thus, the Code has extended the application of social security provisions beyond traditional employment.[23]

Chapter IX (Sections 109-114) gives power to the Central Government to create welfare schemes providing such benefits as life and disability cover, health and maternity benefits, old age protection and accident insurance. However, these provisions are discretionary and their implementation depends on government notifications and contributions of aggregators.

The funding mechanism according to Section 114(4) envisages contributions of 1-2% of the annual turnover of aggregators, capped at 5% of total payments to gig workers. Despite this provision, the enforcement of social security provisions is weak as the workers face lack of adequate accident support and insurance.

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[22] M A Cherry and A Aloisi, '"Dependent contractors" in the gig economy: A comparative approach' (2017) 66 *Am U L Rev* 635.
[23] Government of India, *The Code on Social Security 2020 (Act No 36 of 2020)* <https://www.indiacode.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/16823/1/aA2020-36.pdf>.

The state-level initiatives to provide the practical application of provisions of the Code (for example, the Bihar Platform-Based Gig Workers (Registration, Social Security and Welfare) Act, 2025) create State Welfare Boards, mandate platform registration, define termination rules, and set minimum insurance cover. Nonetheless, the implementation of these initiatives raises the constitutional questions because of the Concurrent List (Entry 23, List III).[24]

This legislative momentum at the state level is noteworthy. Rajasthan was the first Indian state to enact dedicated gig worker legislation, passing the Rajasthan Platform Based Gig Workers (Registration and Welfare) Act on 24 July 2023. This was followed by the Karnataka Platform Based Gig Workers (Social Security and Welfare) Act, 2025, which came into force in September 2025 and introduced, among other protections, an explicit right for gig workers to refuse tasks without adverse consequences. Jharkhand enacted similar legislation in August 2025, making it the fourth state in India to provide statutory welfare protection to platform workers.[25] Taken together, these developments signal a significant shift in the sub-national regulatory landscape, even as the constitutional question of competence between the central and state governments remains unresolved.[26]

7.2 Constitutional Principles and Judicial Interpretation

It is necessary to consider the conditions of gig workers in the context of constitutional protections. First, the right to livelihood is protected as a part of the right to life by Article 21 according to Olga Tellis v. Bombay Municipal Corporation (1985).[27] The gig workers often experience precarious incomes and sudden deactivations. The second constitutional principle relevant to gig workers is Article 14 which guarantees equality before the law

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[24] Government of Bihar, *The Bihar Platform-Based Gig Workers (Registration, Social Security and Welfare) Act, 2025* <https://prsindia.org/files/bills_acts/acts_states/bihar/2025/Act8of2025BR.pdf>.

[25] 'Rajasthan Passes Rajasthan Platform Based Gig Workers (Registration and Welfare) Act, 2023' (Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas, 30 August 2023) <https://corporate.cyrilamarchandblogs.com/2023/08/rajasthan-passes-rajasthan-platform-based-gig-workers-registration-and-welfare-act-2023/> accessed 6 September 2026; Pavan Mamidi, 'Beyond Welfare in India's Gig Sector' (*Labour Review*, 25 September 2025) <https://labourreview.org/beyond-welfare/> accessed 6 September 2026.

[26] 'Karnataka Platform Based Gig Workers (Social Security and Welfare) Act, 2025: What Aggregators in Karnataka Must Know' (Lexology, 23 September 2025) <https://www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=990141a9-1d9a-479e-967c-5b0638b1976d> accessed 6 September 2026.

[27] *Olga Tellis v Bombay Municipal Corporation* (1985) 3 SCC 545 (SC India).

and protection against arbitrariness. The medium platforms do ban the ID of workers without giving them a chance to defend themselves. The platform rating system and deactivation raise issues of arbitrariness and violation of the principles of natural justice.

Algorithmic governance used by platforms implies lack of transparency and accountability. Automated decision-making is in contradiction with the constitutional requirement of procedural fairness.[28] In judicial discourse, the issue of algorithmic accountability has become topical recently and is recognized as necessary for digital labour relations.

The European Union's Platform Work Directive (2024/2831) provides a valuable comparative reference for designing algorithmic accountability obligations. The Directive introduces a rebuttable presumption of employment for platform workers who satisfy certain criteria of control, and imposes mandatory transparency requirements on algorithmic management systems, including a prohibition on automated decisions such as account suspension without human review. EU member states are required to implement these provisions into national law by December 2026. The Directive's approach of embedding procedural safeguards within the architecture of algorithmic governance offers a template that India's legislators could adapt to the domestic constitutional framework.[29]

7.3 Labor Law Perspective

Classification of QCD gig workers as independent contractors makes them excluded from labor protections like minimum wages (Minimum Wages Act, 1948), social insurance (Employees' State Insurance Act, 1948) and trade union rights (Trade Unions Act, 1926). The contractual framing allows platforms to externalize risks while maintaining functional control through incentive structures and performance ratings.[30] According to the empirical

[28] F Pasquale, *The Black Box Society: The Secret Algorithms that Control Money and Information* (Harvard University Press 2015).

[29] European Parliament and Council, Directive (EU) 2024/2831 on Improving Working Conditions in Platform Work [2024] OJ L 2024/2831; 'Working Conditions of Platform Workers' (European Parliament, 2024) <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/legislative-train/theme-a-europe-fit-for-the-digital-age/file-improving-working-conditions-of-platform-workers> accessed 6 September 2026.

[30] J Prassl, *Humans as a Service: The Promise and Perils of Work in the Gig Economy* (Oxford University Press 2018).

survey, 47.5% of gig workers lack accident insurance even though the corresponding consideration exists in the Social Security Code.

8. Legal Gaps and Challenges

It can be concluded that while the Indian legal framework has already recognized the gig and platform workers, this recognition is far from sufficient to address structural reality of platform-based QCD workers. Legal gaps are systemic rather than accidental.

First, it should be noted that the Code on Social Security, 2020 (Act No. 36 of 2020) has recognized gig and platform workers but does not provide them with binding obligations to aggregators and relies on welfare schemes instead. There is always a lag between technological innovation and regulation. Moreover, the empirical survey suggests that 62.5% of respondents are unaware of their statutory rights.

Second, the misclassification of QCD gig workers as independent contractors deprives them of essential labour-law protection. In practice, platforms control the workers through ratings and incentives while being not employers in the sense of labour law.[31]

Third, it should be noted that algorithmic accountability is absent in India as well. The order allocation, rating and deactivation processes are controlled by algorithms without any transparency or possibility to check the decision made.[32] Empirically, it is revealed that 62.5% of gig workers cannot dispute their rating and 52.5% cannot request a hearing before adverse decision is made. It violates Article 14 and guarantee of equality and non-arbitrariness.

The constitutional vulnerability of state-level gig worker legislation is already being tested. Karnataka's Platform Based Gig Workers (Social Security and Welfare) Act, 2025 has been challenged before the Karnataka High Court by several food delivery and quick commerce platforms. While the court declined to stay the law pending the hearing, the litigation

[31] A Stewart and J Stanford, 'Regulating work in the gig economy: What are the options?' (2017) 28 *Econ & Labour Relations Rev* 420 <https://doi.org/10.1177/1035304617722461>.
[32] F Pasquale, *The Black Box Society: The Secret Algorithms that Control Money and Information* (Harvard University Press 2015).

underscores the structural risk that even well-intentioned state legislation may be dismantled through sustained judicial challenge by resource-rich platforms before it yields tangible benefits to workers.[33]

The social-security mechanisms remain ineffective. Both central and state initiatives, including the Bihar Platform-Based Gig Workers (Welfare and Regulation) Act, 2025, depend on contributory schemes without clear obligations for platforms. As a result, large segments of workers still lack insurance and financial assistance.[34] The absence of a comprehensive, enforceable social-security regime continues to perpetuate inequality within India's digital labour economy.

9. Recommendations and Policy Suggestions

Given the legal gaps and the empirical findings, there is an urgent need for development of a proper legal framework governing gig and platform workers in India. The below-mentioned recommendations seek to address structural flaws of the current system and ensure a balanced regulation between innovation and labour protection.

9.1 Creation of Enforceable Rights Framework

The current legal regime needs to go beyond recognition of gig workers and creation of enforceable statutory rights. The provisions of the Code on Social Security, 2020 have to be strengthened so that platform aggregators would be made to comply with their statutory obligations especially concerning accident insurance, health care and income security. Rights to be availed to QCD workers negatively, that means, when they are violated they

[33] 'Karnataka Gig Workers Act: What the Law Says and Why It's Contested' (*Business Standard*, 8 July 2026) <https://www.business-standard.com/india-news/karnataka-gig-workers-act-explained-benefits-high-court-platforms-126070800776_1.html> accessed 6 September 2026.

[34] R K Rao, K Kumar, R Gupta, S Khurana, K N Verma, S Chandra, R R Singh and O Dharap, *India's Booming Gig and Platform Economy: Perspectives and Recommendations on the Future of Work* (NITI Aayog June 2022) <https://www.niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2022-06/25th_June_Final_Report_27062022.pdf>.

can be enforced through courts. Any welfare scheme cannot remain voluntary but has to be implemented according to certain standards and procedures.

9.2 Worker Classification and Portable Benefit System (PBS)

There is a need to reconsider the rigid classification of gig workers as independent contractors. It can be useful to introduce an intermediate or hybrid classification which will allow extending limited but necessary labour rights without violating the flexible work arrangement. A portable benefits system has become a popular solution for ensuring continuity of social protection in different platforms.[35] PBS allows registration of QCD workers in a common governmental digital directory. Under this mechanism, workers preserve and accumulate their experience records and benefit entitlements regardless of moving from one platform to another. Despite change of the employer, continuity of benefits will be maintained. This way, the economic dependence of the workers on platforms is recognized while ensuring their welfare without any harm to work flexibility.

9.3 Regulation of Algorithmic Management

Approaches to regulation of the gig economy in other jurisdictions, especially in the EU, emphasize the importance of transparency obligations and setting up of minimum labour standards.[36] In light of the crucial role that algorithmic systems play in platform management, special legal provisions need to be established which would make platforms do the following:

- Provide explanations to the rating and performance metrics systems,
- Allow challenging of adverse decisions by workers and
- Guarantee review of the decisions made by algorithms by humans.

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[35] S D Harris and A B Krueger, *A Proposal for Modernizing Labor Laws for Twenty-First-Century Work: The "Independent Worker"* (Hamilton Project 2015).

[36] European Commission, *Proposal for a Directive on Improving Working Conditions in Platform Work* (Brussels, European Commission 2021).European Commission, *Proposal for a Directive on Improving Working Conditions in Platform Work* (Brussels, European Commission 2021).

This way, the platform practices will be aligned with the principles of the Indian Constitution, whereby providing the workers with the chance to challenge the decisions when their IDs are banned or suspended.

9.4 Social Security Systems

It is necessary to develop a comprehensive and enforceable social security system for gig workers which can be based on the following components:

- Mandatory contribution of platforms to welfare funds,
- Universal access to accident and health insurance and
- Mechanisms of financial assistance in case of income interruption.

Legislative initiatives at state level such as the Bihar Platform-Based Gig Workers (Registration, Social Security and Welfare) Act, 2025 need to be supported and harmonized with central legislation. The central legislation need to adopt these mechanism which making its enforceability compulsory

9.5 Mechanisms of Grievance Redressal

There is a need to establish grievance redressal mechanisms aimed at solving the disputes between workers and platforms. Dedicated regulatory agencies or welfare boards can be empowered to:

- Adjudicate the disputes arising in connection with ratings, payments, and account deactivation,
- Monitoring of compliance with statutory obligations and
- Providing the mechanisms for remedy to workers.

This can be achieved only by establishing fast track tribunal like structures based on ADR mechanism, where officers specialized in labour laws will make the adjudications, this way the principles of natural justice will be put into practice in the gig economy.

9.6 Promotion of Collectivization of Workers

The legal system has to enable the workers to organize in associations or trade unions. The recognition of worker organizations will help to solve the problem of imbalance of power between the platforms and workers and will contribute to participatory governance.

10. Conclusion

The rapid development of the gig economy, in particular, in quick-commerce sector has completely changed the nature of work in India. Although this economic model brings about new jobs and convenient service for consumers, it poses serious risks for workers because of structural flaws in the legal framework. The results of this research show that the workers suffer from constant problems of unstable income, unsafe work and lack of social security, which are not sufficiently addressed by the current legislation.

The future of labour regulation relies on adaptation of legal systems to new forms of employment while protecting fundamental rights (International Labour Organization, 2016). Although there are certain steps taken in this direction such as the Code on Social Security, 2020 and state-level initiatives like the Bihar Platform-Based Gig Workers (Registration, Social Security and Welfare) Act, 2025, they are not sufficient for ensuring effective and enforceable rights. The ongoing classification of QCD workers as independent contractors along with insufficient regulation of algorithmic management resulted in a structural imbalance which violates workers' rights and undermines their dignity.

This research demonstrates the need for a paradigm shift from a framework of recognition without enforcement to a framework which guarantees substantive rights, accountability and procedural fairness. The integration of empirical findings and legal analysis emphasizes the necessity of creation of a comprehensive and responsive regulatory framework which would align technological advancements with constitutional principles and labour welfare schemes.

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7. European Commission, *Proposal for a Directive on Improving Working Conditions in Platform Work* (2021).
8. Gandini A, 'Labour process theory and the gig economy' (2019) 72 Human Relations 1039.
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