

LABOUR WELFARE AND SOCIAL SECURITY IN THE INFORMAL AND GIG ECONOMY

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The Government of India has introduced a pension scheme for unorganized workers namely **Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-dhan (PM-SYM)** to ensure old age protection for Unorganised Workers. The scheme was launched in March, 2019. The third party evaluation of PM-SYM was done by Indian Institute of Public Administration that recommended inter-alia, to increase income limit from Rs.15000 to Rs.18000 and entry age for eligibility criteria to be relooked to 18 to 50 years.

For the first time, the definition of 'gig workers' and 'platform workers' and provisions related to the same have been provided in the Code on Social Security, 2020 which has been enacted by the Parliament. The Code provides for framing of suitable social security measures for gig workers and platform workers on matters relating to life and disability cover, accident insurance, health and maternity benefits, old age protection, etc.

The Ministry of Labour and Employment had launched the e-Shram-"One Stop-Solution" on 21st October 2024. This entails integration of different social security/welfare schemes at single portal i.e. e-Shram. This enables unorganised workers registered on e-Shram to access social security schemes and see benefits availed by them so far, on single portal i.e. e-Shram.

"Labour" as a subject is in the Concurrent List of the Constitution of India and under the Codes, the power to make rules has been entrusted to Central Government as well as State Governments. As a step towards implementation of the four Labour Codes, the Central Government has pre-published the draft Rules under Labour Codes. As per available information, 32, 31, 31 and 31 State/Union Territories have also pre-published the draft Rules under 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, respectively.

The Labour Codes strengthen the protection available to workers, including unorganized workers in terms of statutory minimum wage, social security and healthcare of workers. The Code on Wages, 2019 has envisaged statutory right for minimum wages and timely payment of wages to all workers to support sustainable growth and inclusive development. Besides, the Code on Social Security, 2020 aims to extend social security benefits to all workers both in the organised and unorganised sectors. The Labour Codes have been aligned with the present economic scenario and technological advancements along with reduction in multiplicity of definitions & authorities. The Codes also ease compliance mechanism aiming to promote ease of doing business/setting up of enterprises and catalyze creation of employment opportunities while ensuring safety, health and social security of every worker. Use of technology, such as, web-based Inspection has been introduced in order to ensure transparency & accountability in enforcement. A provision for worker reskilling fund has been envisaged in the Industrial Relations Code, 2020 for re-skilling the retrenched workers which provides for crediting fifteen days' wages last drawn by the worker.

This information was given by Union Minister of State for Labour & Employment, Sushri Shobha Karandlaje in a written reply in the Lok Sabha today.

Himanshu Pathak

