

# **The Future of Indian Labour in the Platform Economy**

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Classification as an employee is perhaps the point of departure to determine who deserves the protections of labour and employment laws. These safeguards may include the right to organize, the right to minimum wage, and the right to unemployment compensation, among many others. However, access to workers' rights at the outset requires classification as an employee.

There has been increasing informalisation of labour over the last three decades. More and more work in the neoliberal economy has been casualised and outsourced. After the invention of smartphones and artificial intelligence, more and more workers are being managed now by data and through various algorithms. Most of the start-up or unicorn companies increasingly rely on algorithms to apply automated managerial control or algorithmic control over workers.

Many casual employment opportunities, particularly in the service sectors in contemporary society, like the delivery of groceries, hailing a cab, delivery of food and medicines at home, are being aided by cellphone applications, or apps, or websites. Therefore, the question arises whether these new economic realities of the relationship imply the entrepreneurial initiative of workers in these sectors, or 'independent partners' as they are being referred to in platform economy, or the worker in these platforms simply remains financially dependent upon the employer, or the dominant 'partner'. In this scenario, the objective of our research would be to find out through different legal mechanisms, and case laws, as far as possible, whether the platform economy can turn into the gateway to opportunities for the uplift of the workers in the neoliberal times or it is the road to a free fall. To understand these new realities of an increasing number of workers, we shall mainly focus on two sectors of the platform economy in India, namely ride-hailing service and grocery delivery service.