

Fairwork

LABOUR STANDARDS

IN THE PLATFORM ECONOMY

Fairwork India Ratings 2024



CONTENTS

03 Executive Summary

04 Key Findings

06 Editorial: ‘Apolitical’ platform demands, ‘political’ worker representations?

08 The Fairwork Project: Towards Decent Labour Standards in the Platform Economy

10 The Fairwork Framework

13 The Legal Context: Progressive legislation, regressive reactions, constructive suggestions

16 Fairwork India Scores 2024

20 Changes in Focus

21 Workers’ Stories

23 Theme in Focus: Structuring time, limiting flexibility: From gigs to ‘GIGS’

25 Platform Changes

26 Pathways to Change

28 The Fairwork Pledge

29 Appendix I: Fairwork Scoring System

34 Appendix II: Operationalising Data Gathering in India

35 Credits and Funding

37 Endnotes

Executive Summary

This report presents Fairwork’s sixth annual study of the work conditions of platform workers on digital labour platforms in India. This year, the report examines the changing nature of platform work as platforms increasingly control when and for how long workers can provide services or gigs. It also discusses the potential impact of proposed legislation for platform workers in Karnataka and Jharkhand.

This year, Fairwork evaluated 11 platforms in India. The Fairwork India team is spearheaded by the Centre for Information Technology and Public Policy (CITAPP) at the International Institute of Information Technology Bangalore (IIITB), with partners at the University of Oxford. The team assessed evidence against five Fairwork principles (Fair Pay, Fair Conditions, Fair Contracts, Fair Management, Fair Representation) through a combination of desk research and worker interviews conducted in Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, Kochi, Thiruvananthapuram, and, where possible, from evidence provided by the platforms. Each Fairwork principle is broken down into two points: a first point, and a second point that can only be awarded if the first point has been fulfilled. Every platform receives a score out of 10. A point is awarded only when there is sufficient evidence that the platform fulfils the conditions for each principle. However, when platforms are taking steps to either design or implement policies that are likely to help them meet the conditions for the principles, those steps are listed in a Changes in Focus section. Thus, the score for a platform must be read not in isolation, but alongside the Changes in Focus section i.e., with the policies being considered or rolled out to change its terms of engagement with workers.

The scoring process is an independent assessment of platforms led by a team of researchers with no affiliation to

workers, platforms or the government. The range in Fairwork scores reported here, across various principles, points to heterogeneity in the organisation and operation of platforms across sectors. We hope that platforms, consumers, workers, regulators and other stakeholders will use the Fairwork framework and ratings to envision, and realise, a fairer platform economy in India. Based on the scores and findings, some platforms have already expressed an interest in creating fairer working conditions. Consumers can use these scores to make informed decisions when choosing which platforms to use. The scores can serve as additional resources for collective worker bodies when they raise demands. We also hope that the findings of this report will provide regulators with a basis to formulate policies for the platform economy in consultation with other stakeholders (workers, platforms, venture capitalists).

Key Findings

1. Only bigbasket and Urban Company were awarded the first point under Fair Pay for instituting a minimum wage policy that guaranteed all their workers earn at least the hourly local minimum wage after factoring in work-related costs.

No platform earned the second point under Fair Pay, which requires platforms to commit to and ensure a local living wage after work-related costs or provide sufficient evidence that all workers earn at least this amount.

2. Amazon Flex, bigbasket, BluSmart, Swiggy, Urban Company, Zepto and Zomato were awarded the first point under Fair Conditions for providing adequate safety equipment, and periodic safety training to workers on their platforms.

Only bigbasket, Swiggy, Urban Company, Zepto and Zomato were awarded the second point for providing workers with accident insurance coverage at no additional cost, monetary compensation for income loss in cases they are unable to work due to medical reasons other than accidents, and for ensuring a worker's standing is not negatively affected when they return after a break taken with prior notice to the platform.

3. Six out of 11 platforms were awarded the first point for Fair Contracts. bigbasket, BluSmart, Swiggy, Urban Company, Zepto, and Zomato were awarded this point for ensuring accessibility and comprehensibility of their contracts, and for having a protocol to protect and manage worker data.

bigbasket, BluSmart, Swiggy, Zepto, and Zomato, met the requirements for the second point under Fair Contracts by adopting a change notification clause in their contracts, reducing asymmetries in liability (such as a provision to compensate workers for losses due to app malfunctions and outages), adopting a Code of Conduct for their subcontractors, and making the variables influencing pricing transparent where dynamic pricing is used.

4. Amazon Flex, bigbasket, BluSmart, Flipkart, Swiggy, Urban Company and Zomato were awarded the first point for Fair Management for providing due process in decisions affecting workers, and channels for workers to appeal disciplinary actions.

There was sufficient evidence from BluSmart, Swiggy, Urban Company and Zomato to meet the second point for the principle. They institutionalised the conduct of regular, external audits to check for biases in their work allocation systems, in addition to adopting policies against the discrimination of platform workers.

5. Representation through a collective body or trade union is a vital dimension of fairness at work.

It is disconcerting that despite the rise in platform worker collectivisation across the country over the past six years, there was insufficient evidence from any platform to show willingness to recognise a collective body of workers. Consequently, no platform could be awarded a point for this principle this year.



‘Apolitical’ platform demands, ‘political’ worker representations?

The reference to platform workers’ conditions in the G20 declaration in 2023,¹ and the passage of the landmark Rajasthan Platform Based Gig Workers (Registration and Welfare) Act (henceforth the Rajasthan Act), also in 2023,² raised expectations that there would be improvement to the working conditions for platform workers in 2024. However, with the Code on Social Security (CoSS) 2020 yet to be notified³ and there being no clarity on when the rules for the Rajasthan Act will be issued, the expectations set in 2023 withered.

But hope springs eternal. In 2024, the manifestos of the two leading political parties for the general elections promised to act on behalf of gig workers.⁴ More substantively, hope took the form of the draft Karnataka Platform Based Gig Workers (Social Security and Welfare) Bill, 2024 (henceforth the Draft Bill),⁵ which was circulated on 29 June for comments. Following Karnataka, the Jharkhand Platform Based Gig Workers (Registration and Welfare) Bill 2024 (henceforth the Jharkhand Draft Bill) was released for comments on 1 July.⁶ The Kerala State Labour Minister also assured that legislation on the matter would be tabled soon.⁷

The Karnataka Draft Bill goes even further than the Rajasthan Act by addressing issues beyond social welfare for workers. It enumerates provisions regarding algorithmic transparency, contracts, internal dispute resolution committees for workers to raise grievances, timely payment and safe working conditions, as will be described later in this report in the Legal Context. It is worth noting here Fairwork India’s continuous engagement with think tanks, government agencies, trade unions and other stakeholders since 2019, in various states across India, to regulate platform work. Interacting with other stakeholders, and witnessing developments in the country’s regulatory landscape, has been a privilege for the Fairwork India team.

INTERACTING WITH OTHER STAKEHOLDERS, AND WITNESSING DEVELOPMENTS IN THE COUNTRY'S REGULATORY LANDSCAPE, HAS BEEN A PRIVILEGE FOR THE FAIRWORK INDIA TEAM.

Since Fairwork India played an active role in the debates that shaped the Karnataka Draft Bill, the experience warrants an exploration of its implications. Thus, the Legal Context highlights the suggestions from various stakeholders including Fairwork India. It also discusses the reactions of platforms to the Draft Bill which, perhaps unsurprisingly, was unfavourable. Those reactions are captured in the submissions from industry bodies, including the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI),⁸ and the National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM).⁹

THE FAIRWORK INDIA TEAM

Balaji Parthasarathy, Janaki Srinivasan, Mounika Neerukonda, Bilahari M, Raktima Kalita, Meghashree Balaraj, Tony Mathew, Aditya Singh, Alessio Bertollini, and Mark Graham

It is noteworthy that platforms are willing to have their interests represented by national industry bodies to resist regulation, despite how resistant platforms have been towards allowing workers' voices to be raised through collective representation.

Thus, since 2019, no platform has been awarded a point for Principle 5 by Fairwork India. As the founder of one platform made clear, "the company prefers to deal directly with its partners" on the grounds that "there is pressure on us. Local politicians and unions get involved; some may seek political mileage."¹⁰ It is curious, therefore, that platforms do not see themselves as also seeking "political mileage" when they allow industry bodies to negotiate on their behalf with the state.

Towards Decent Labour Standards in the Platform Economy

Fairwork evaluates and ranks the working conditions of digital platforms. Our ratings are based on five principles that digital labour platforms should ensure in order to be considered to be offering basic minimum standards of fairness.

We evaluate platforms annually against these principles to show not only what the platform economy is today, but also what it can be. The Fairwork ratings provide an independent perspective on labour conditions of platform work for policymakers, platform companies, workers, and consumers. Our goal is to show that better, and fairer, jobs are possible in the platform economy.

The Fairwork project is coordinated from the Oxford Internet Institute, University of Oxford, and the WZB Berlin Social Science Center. Our network of researchers has rated platforms in 38 countries across five continents. In every country, Fairwork collaborates closely with workers, platforms, advocates and policymakers to promote a fairer future of platform work. In India, this research is led by the Centre for Information Technology and Public Policy, International Institute of Information Technology Bangalore.



Fairwork countries

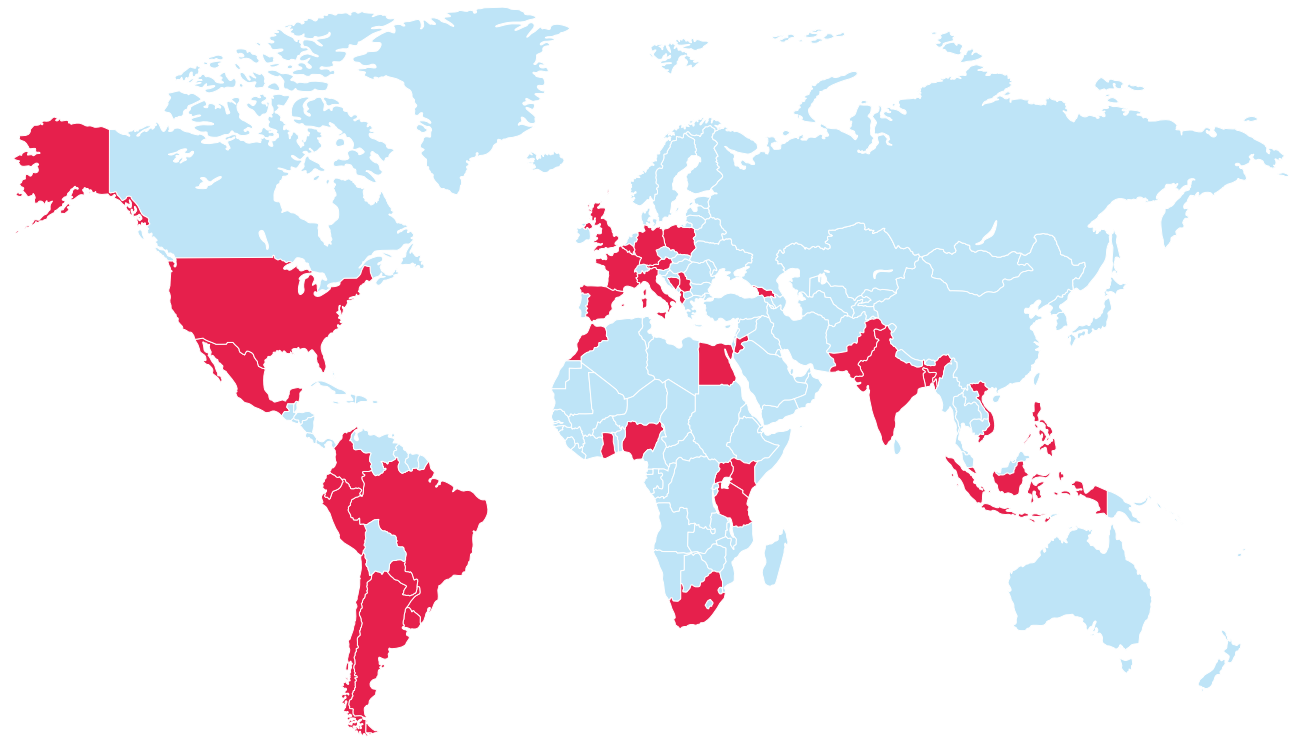


Figure 1. Map of Fairwork countries

AFRICA

Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda

ASIA

Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Lebanon, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Vietnam

EUROPE

Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, France, Georgia, Germany, Italy, Poland, Serbia, Spain, UK

SOUTH AMERICA

Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay

NORTH AMERICA

Mexico, USA

The Fairwork Framework

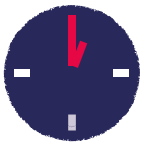
Fairwork evaluates the working conditions of digital labour platforms and ranks them on how well they do. To do this, we use five principles that digital labour platforms should ensure to be considered as offering 'fair work'. The five Fairwork principles were developed through a multi-stakeholder workshop at the International Labour Organisation (ILO), and many more workshops in various countries. To ensure that these global principles were applicable in the Indian context, meetings were held in Bangalore in July 2018, and in Ahmedabad in January 2019. In the years since then, the principles and their operationalisation have been further fine-tuned. Further details on the thresholds for each principle, and the criteria used to assess the collected evidence to score platforms, can be found in the Appendix I.

STEP 1 The Five Principles



Fair Pay

Workers, irrespective of their employment classification, should earn a decent income in their home jurisdiction after taking account of work-related costs. We assess earnings according to the mandated minimum wage in the home jurisdiction, as well as the current living wage.



Fair Conditions

Platforms should have policies in place to protect workers from foundational risks arising from the processes of work and should take proactive measures to protect and promote the health and safety of workers.



Fair Contracts

Terms and conditions should be accessible, readable and comprehensible. The party contracting with the worker must be subject to local law and must be identified in the contract. Regardless of the workers' employment status, the contract should be free of clauses which unreasonably exclude liability on the part of the service user and/or the platform.



Fair Management

There should be a documented process through which workers can be heard, can appeal decisions affecting them, and be informed of the reasons behind those decisions. There must be a clear channel of communication to workers involving the ability to appeal management decisions or deactivation. The use of algorithms should be transparent and result in equitable outcomes for workers. There should be an identifiable and documented policy that ensures equity in the way workers are managed on a platform (for example, in the hiring, disciplining, or firing of workers).



Fair Representation

Platforms should provide a documented process through which worker voice can be expressed. Irrespective of their employment classification, workers should have the right to organise in collective bodies, and platforms should be prepared to cooperate and negotiate with them.

STEP 2

Methodology Overview

The Fairwork project uses three approaches to measure fairness of working conditions on digital labour platforms: desk research, approaching platforms for evidence, and worker interviews. Through these three methods, we seek evidence on whether platforms operate in accordance with the five Fairwork Principles.

Desk research

Each annual Fairwork ratings cycle starts with desk research to map the range of platforms to be scored, identify points of contact with management, develop suitable interview guides and survey instruments, and design recruitment strategies to access workers. For each platform, we gather and analyse a wide range of publicly available documents including contracts, terms and conditions, published policies and procedures, as well as digital interfaces. Desk research also flags any publicly available information that could assist in scoring different platforms: for instance, the provision of particular services to workers, or the existence of past or ongoing disputes.

Once the list of platforms has been finalised, each platform is invited to participate in Fairwork's annual ranking study and provided with information about the process. This year, eleven prominent platforms operating in Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, Kochi and Thiruvananthapuram were identified based on the size of their workforce, consumer base, and investments.

Platform evidence

The second method involves approaching platforms for evidence. Platform management are invited to submit evidence and discuss the platform's degree of compliance with each of the Fairwork principles. Evidence may include published policies and/or standard operating procedures, public commitments, and website/app functionality. This evidence provides insights into the operation and business model of the platform, while also opening up a dialogue through which the platform could agree to implement changes based on the principles. In cases where platform managements do not agree to participate in the research, we limit our scoring to evidence obtained through desk research and worker interviews.

Worker interviews

The third method is interviewing platform workers directly. In India, 440 workers were interviewed across five cities. These interviews do not aim to be a statistically representative set of experiences. Rather, they are worker case-studies to examine platforms' policies and practices in the field as they pertain to the Fairwork principles. Specifically, they seek to gain insight into how work is carried out, and how work processes are managed and experienced, on platforms. The interviews situate platform work in the careers of workers by understanding their motivation to work for a platform, how long they envision undertaking work on the current platform before seeking an alternative either on another platform or in a different sector, and how their experience of platform work is shaped by their interaction with fellow workers and the external labour¹¹. These interviews also enable Fairwork researchers to see copies of the contracts issued to workers and to access the app interface, including payout and support screens. This method alerts the team to the presence of issues, but not the frequency or likelihood of their occurrence.

The worker interviews are semi-structured and make use of a series of questions relating to the 10 Fairwork (sub) principles. In order to qualify for the interviews, workers have to be over the age of 18 and have worked with the platform for at least three months. The interviews were conducted in English, Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil and Telugu.

Putting it all together

This threefold approach provides a way to cross-check the claims made by platforms, while also providing the opportunity to collect evidence from multiple sources. Final scores are collectively decided by the Fairwork team based on all three sources of evidence. Points are only awarded if sufficient evidence exists on each threshold.

How we score

Each of the five Fairwork principles is broken down into two points: a first point, and a second point that can only be awarded if the first point has been fulfilled. Every platform receives a score out of 10. Platforms are only given a point when they can satisfactorily demonstrate their implementation of the principles. Failing to achieve a point does not necessarily mean that a platform does not comply with the principle in question. It simply means that we are unable to evidence its compliance.

The scoring involves a series of stages. First, the in-country team collates the evidence and assigns preliminary scores. The collated evidence is then sent to external reviewers for independent scoring. These reviewers are both members of the Fairwork teams in other countries, as well as members of the central Fairwork team. Once the external reviewers have assigned their scoring, all reviewers meet to discuss the scores and decide final scoring. Platforms are given the opportunity to submit further evidence to earn points that they were initially not awarded. These scores then form the final annual scoring that is published in the annual country Fairwork report.

**FURTHER DETAILS ON
THE FAIRWORK
SCORING SYSTEM ARE
IN THE APPENDIX.**



THE LEGAL CONTEXT

Progressive legislation, regressive reactions, constructive suggestions

In 2024, the Karnataka State Labour Department, after consultations with various stakeholders, including Fairwork India and the International Labour Organisation,¹² drafted a bill that promises notable changes to the working conditions of platform workers. While the judicial decision on their employment status is yet to be made,¹³ the Karnataka Draft Bill, like the CoSS and the Rajasthan Act, extends social security measures to platform workers.

The Karnataka Draft Bill follows the Rajasthan Act to enable social security provision through a Welfare Board constituted by representatives of workers, aggregators, civil society and the state. Platform workers and aggregators will be registered on the Board, and the onus of providing data for registering the workers is on the aggregators. This Board will monitor the collection of welfare fees and enact welfare schemes.

The Draft Bill offers two methods for the state to collect a welfare fee. One is collecting a percentage of each aggregator's annual state-specific turnover, as specified in the CoSS. The other is the transaction-based fee collection model, inspired by the Maharashtra Mathadi, Hamal and Other Manual Workers Act, 1969.¹⁴ To oversee these transactions, the Draft Bill, like the Rajasthan Act, proposes

establishing a Central Transaction Information Management System. This system will map all payments made to platform workers, provide for transparent fee collection, ascertain the contribution made by each worker, and help proportionally distribute the benefits of welfare schemes rolled out by the state.

If the Karnataka Draft Bill follows the Rajasthan model to provide social welfare, in other aspects, it goes beyond Rajasthan. A key feature of the Draft Bill is its departure from the CoSS to define gig workers, not as those falling outside the traditional employer–employee relationship but in terms of who they are and what they do.¹⁵

Another noteworthy difference is the provision to regulate the contracts between aggregators and workers. Section 12 of the Draft Bill mandates that contracts be comprehensible, that workers be notified of changes at least fourteen days before their implementation and include options for workers to terminate the contract, and the right to refuse or reject a specified number of gigs per week without any adverse consequences. Similarly, Section 15 mandates that contracts specify grounds for termination, and that workers be given at least fourteen days' notice before termination. Under Section 13, the Draft Bill further empowers the state to publish sector-specific contract guidelines and review contract templates to ensure their fairness.¹⁶

On the crucial aspect of addressing worker grievances, the Karnataka Draft Bill proposes two standalone mechanisms. The first, drawing from the Rajasthan Act, is the redressal of complaints through the Grievance Redressal Officer notified by the state government.¹⁷ The second mechanism, new to the Karnataka Draft Bill, is the establishment of an Internal Dispute Resolution Committee by aggregators,¹⁸ to address issues raised against them by or on behalf of the aggrieved party.¹⁹

On wages, Section 16 of the Draft Bill mandates at least a weekly payment model and requires that aggregators provide reasons for any deduction in payment. Regarding working conditions, Section 17 asks aggregators to provide, as reasonably practicable, a safe working environment without health risks.

Upon releasing the Draft Bill into the public domain, the Government of Karnataka allowed 10 days for comments. In their submissions, IAMAI and NASSCOM sought more time for consultation to ensure “a balanced and collaborative approach that aligns with existing Central Government laws and involves all stakeholders in a transparent and equitable manner.”²⁰ A key demand for alignment made in the NASSCOM submission is that the Karnataka Draft Bill's definition of 'gig workers' be rejected in favour of the CoSS definition.

The rationale for a return to the CoSS definition is on the grounds that platforms do not exercise any “degree of control, commitment and accountability” over independent contractors i.e. platform workers.²¹ The assertion that workers are beyond the control of platforms also leads the NASSCOM submission to challenge Section 12 of the Karnataka Draft Bill which codifies the right of workers

to reject services. The submission claims that “gig work is only done as per the availability and willingness of the gig worker. Therefore, this right to reject work appears to be a redundant proposal.”²² However, the claim that platforms do not exercise control over platform workers ignores evidence to the contrary, as workers' time, and by extension, their earnings, are increasingly subject to tighter controls. The Theme in Focus section of this report describes this process in more detail.

The NASSCOM submission also wants a “sunset clause that will subsume the Bill into the CoSS when the same comes into force” on the grounds that the Draft Bill “proposes a parallel structure of social security law for platform gig workers, duplicating the central law.”²³ However, the date of notification of the four-year old CoSS is unclear, and subsuming the entire Draft Bill under the CoSS risks diluting the scope of the Draft Bill, which extends far beyond social security. Indeed, the NASSCOM submission challenges the scope of the Draft Bill by arguing that it places obligations on aggregators, which are “onerous...incompatible with the functioning of gig platforms and can adversely impact their operations in the State.”²⁴

A KEY DEMAND FOR ALIGNMENT MADE IN THE NASSCOM SUBMISSION IS THAT THE KARNATAKA DRAFT BILL'S DEFINITION OF 'GIG WORKERS' BE REJECTED IN FAVOUR OF THE COSS DEFINITION.

An instance of a requirement the submission considers onerous is contained in Section 14 of the Draft Bill which pertains to providing information about how platforms either categorise workers or use rating systems to determine the “main parameters which, either individually or collectively, are the most important for determining the allocation of work, the distribution of work, the assessment of work carried out, and the grounds for denial of work.” The submission argues that “providing such information on an aggregator's internal processes can compromise its proprietary information.”²⁵ This argument ignores that

one of the ways by which platforms exercise control over workers is through algorithmic opacity, or the “wilful self-protection in the name of competitive advantage”²⁶ about key parameters.²⁷ Further, how the proprietary information of the platform will be compromised by informing workers of the factors affecting their work and conditions is unspecified.

The IAMAI also claims that the fee to be paid to the Welfare Board is onerous as it “can lead to price distortions.... potentially leading to a diminished demand for gig-based services,....a reduction in earning opportunities for gig workers....a significant rise in operational costs for aggregators....[that] can affect the sustainable growth of the gig economy as a whole in Karnataka.”²⁸ In the absence of any analysis of how price distortions will occur, or that there will be a rise in operational costs for platforms, the claim that there will be a reduction in earning opportunities for workers, or that the sustainable growth of the platform economy will be affected, is no more than speculation. Further, as the first worker story in this report highlights, in practice, consumers have become so reliant on platforms that moving out of these systems seems improbable for them and, consequently, workers too.

The reactions of NASSCOM, or the claim by IAMAI that “India’s digital industry is going to be a major driving force in the economic and social development of the country which includes job creation, *innovation*, contribution to the GDP, inclusion and empowerment of our citizens”(emphasis added) leads one to wonder if in fact, the “gig corporations’ primary innovation: [is] the misclassification model, which deprives workers of job security, benefits, and protections on the job, including the right to organise.”²⁹

Aside from the submissions of industry bodies to the Karnataka Draft Bill, worker unions, civil society organisations, and researchers, including Fairwork India, joined forces to make their suggestions.³⁰ The suggestions pointed to the need to clarify, in Section 17, what constitutes a ‘safe’ and ‘risk free’ working environment, and to provide basic standards and parameters to ensure “adequate periods of rest during the workday and during the work week, access to sanitary and rest facilities, including reasonable travel time to and from such facilities.” The suggestions also called for an expansion in the scope of the Internal Dispute Resolution Committee beyond the eight grievances listed, and for the constitution of an appeal mechanism from the Internal Dispute Resolution Committee to ensure grievances of platform workers against the aggregator are satisfactorily resolved.

Fairwork India also independently submitted a list of suggestions to the Department of Labour,³¹ The Fairwork suggestions pertain to the need for provisions for subcontractors, clarifying the basis for calculating the welfare fee additional cost to workers, and improving the accessibility of their contracts.

THE REGISTRATION IS TO EXTEND SOCIAL SECURITY SCHEMES. A COMMITTEE IS ALSO TO BE ESTABLISHED TO DELIBERATE WITH STAKEHOLDERS TO ESTABLISH A SOCIAL SECURITY FRAMEWORK.

The Karnataka Draft Bill was followed by the release of Jharkhand’s on 1 July 2024. The Jharkhand Draft Bill is similar to Karnataka’s, except that it adopts the definition of the ‘gig worker’ from the COSS. In mid-July, a private member’s bill, the Kerala Gig, Platform Workers’ Welfare Fund Bill, 2024, was tabled in the Kerala Legislative Assembly. However, it was later withdrawn as the State Labour Minister assured that legislation on the matter would soon be tabled by the government.³² Following this, the Labour Commissionerate of Kerala held a workshop in August 2024, calling forth stakeholders, including platform workers, representatives from platforms, trade union representatives, and industry experts and researchers (including Fairwork India), to provide suggestions for a ‘Gig Workers Bill’ they will be proposing soon.

Even as these state-level initiatives are in different stages, on 16 September 2024, the Labour and Employment Ministry, Government of India, asked aggregators to register themselves and urged them to “assist” in the registration of the workers within three months on the e-Shram portal.³³ The registration is to extend social security schemes. A committee is also to be established to deliberate with stakeholders to establish a social security framework. While this step has been welcomed by workers and civil society organisations with a sense of guarded optimism, they seek assurance that it will “respect India’s federal structure, preserve and build upon state-level innovations, and truly prioritise worker welfare and worker-produced knowledge.”³⁴

Fairwork India Scores 2024

Minimum standards
of fair work

bigbasket	6 /10	● ● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○
Swiggy	6 /10	● ● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○
Urban Company	6 /10	● ● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○
Zomato	6 /10	● ● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○
BluSmart	5 /10	● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
Zepto	4 /10	● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
Amazon Flex	2 /10	● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
Flipkart	1 /10	● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
Ola	-	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
Porter	-	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
Uber	-	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

**MORE DETAILS ON THE SCORES
ARE AVAILABLE AT:**

WWW.FAIR.WORK/INDIA

Scores 2024, by Principle



Principle 1:
Fair
Pay



Principle 2:
Fair
Conditions



Principle 3:
Fair
Contracts



Principle 4:
Fair
Management



Principle 5:
Fair
Representation

	1.1	1.2	2.1	2.2	3.1	3.2	4.1	4.2	5.1	5.2	Total
bigbasket	●	○	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	6
Swiggy	○	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	6
Urban Company	●	○	●	●	●	○	●	●	○	○	6
Zomato	○	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	6
BluSmart	○	○	●	○	●	●	●	●	○	○	5
Zepto	○	○	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	4
Amazon Flex	○	○	●	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	2
Flipkart	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	1
Ola	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	-
Porter	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	-
Uber	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	-

The scores in this report rely on data collected using the Fairwork Framework as described in an earlier section. Following desk research, the Fairwork India team interviewed 440 workers from the 11 platforms in five cities and collected evidence from the managements of platforms who engaged with us.³⁵ Appendix I provides further details of the evidence used to score each point in 2024 and how it was collected.

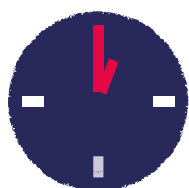
Explaining the scores



Fair Pay

Of the 11 platforms evaluated this year, only two platforms, bigbasket and Urban Company, were awarded the first point under Fair Pay.³⁶ In addition to ensuring that payments are made in full, and on time, both platforms have a publicly available wage policy that commits to ensuring their workers will earn at least the hourly local minimum wage after factoring in work-related costs such as fuel, vehicle maintenance insurance, and data.³⁷

The second point under Fair Pay is awarded to platforms whose workers earn at least the local living wage after costs.³⁸ This year too, there was insufficient evidence to award any platform this point.



Fair Conditions

Platform workers face several risks in the course of their work—including road accidents and injuries, theft, crime and violence, and adverse weather conditions. For this principle, we examined measures adopted by platforms to mitigate these risks and drew on worker interviews to determine the overall effectiveness and awareness of these policies.

This year, the first point was awarded to Amazon Flex, bigbasket, BluSmart, Swiggy, Urban Company, Zepto, and Zomato. These platforms ensured that task-specific risks were mitigated by providing workers with adequate safety equipment, and periodic safety training to workers on their

platforms. They also included provisions for risks such as accidents or theft, and easy access to public emergency infrastructure to ensure adequate support to mitigate the risk of lone working.

The second point was awarded to bigbasket, Swiggy, Urban Company, Zepto, and Zomato for providing workers with accident insurance at no additional cost, monetary compensation for income loss in cases when they were unable to work due to medical reasons other than accidents, and ensuring workers' standing was not negatively affected when they returned after a break taken with prior notice to the platform.



Fair Contracts

This principle examined whether platform workers are provided with accessible and comprehensible contracts with terms and conditions that do not impose asymmetric liabilities on workers. This year, bigbasket, BluSmart,

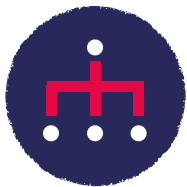
Swiggy, Urban Company, Zepto, and Zomato were awarded the first point under Fair Contracts for taking steps to improve accessibility through multi-lingual contracts that were clear and readily available to workers. Additionally,

platforms that scored the first point under this principle had protocols for adequate, responsible, and ethical data protection and management of worker data.

Award of the second point under Fair Contracts requires that the platform notify workers of changes in their terms of engagement within a specified time period, ahead of the enforcement of these changes. It also requires that contracts do not impose disproportionate liabilities. bigbasket, BluSmart, Swiggy, Zepto, and Zomato were awarded this point for having a change notification clause in their contract, and for having contracts which do not exempt the platforms from liabilities for working conditions. In addition to relative symmetry in their other liabilities, these platforms introduced a clause in their contracts to compensate workers for losses they might incur due to app

malfunctions, or for failures of the platform's systems or networks.

The thresholds for the second point under the Fair Contract principle also highlight the issues concerning subcontracted workers and dynamic pricing mechanisms. Those platforms which used subcontractors, and were awarded the second point, introduced provisions in their contracts stating that workers onboarded through subcontractors would enjoy at least the same terms and conditions as those onboarded directly, and that there was a process in place to monitor their working conditions. Further, platforms that use dynamic pricing for services included a provision in their contracts specifying the variables used to determine pricing.



Fair Management

Amazon Flex, bigbasket, BluSmart, Flipkart, Swiggy, Urban Company and Zomato were awarded the first point under Fair Management for providing due process in decisions affecting workers and providing channels for workers to appeal disciplinary actions meaningfully. These platforms have effective grievance redressal policies and multiple channels, such as ticketing systems, chat-based solutions, and call-back features, that provide access to a human representative (in multiple regional languages) for all workers (including those who have been deactivated). For workers who have felt that connecting to a call centre agent hasn't been effective, some platforms have introduced an escalation process to connect to fleet managers or hub managers. The existence

of multiple channels and escalation protocols allows workers to communicate with the platform to resolve grievances and meaningfully appeal penalties, low ratings, and ID blocks.

The second point under Fair Management was awarded to BluSmart, Swiggy, Urban Company and Zomato. These platforms ensured adequate policies and processes to protect workers against discrimination, and sought to remove barriers and promote inclusion for workers from disadvantaged and underrepresented groups. They have also institutionalised the conduct of regular independent external audits of their algorithms to ensure they were free of bias, allowing them to meet the thresholds for this point.



Fair Representation

To be awarded the first point for Fair Representation, platforms must have documented mechanisms for the collective expression of the voices of all workers, ensure that workers' freedom of association is not inhibited, and have a written statement of willingness to recognise or negotiate with a collective, independent body of workers.

There was insufficient evidence from any of the 11 platforms for even the first point under Fair Representation in 2024. Despite many instances of workers' protests and strikes across the country, and legislative changes addressing the platform economy over the years, platforms in India refuse to formally recognise or negotiate with workers' collectives.

Changes in Focus

Platforms hold the potential to make changes to improve the conditions of their workers. The changes implemented by platforms are motivated by various factors. The motivations include insights from the evidence collected by Fairwork India, especially from interviews with workers and their representatives; learning from the practices of other platforms in the global Fairwork network; and responses to broader economic and social pressures.

Against this backdrop, the goal of this section is two-fold. The first goal is to showcase the policy changes that platforms have either committed to or are in the process of making to meet the Fairwork thresholds. These do not yet merit a point since translating policies into practice is rarely instantaneous. However, these changes by the platforms are presented here as they can potentially improve the conditions for platform workers. Thus, reading the scores in conjunction with this section will provide a glimpse into how the platform economy is likely to evolve. Second, the showcase is meant to help other stakeholders within this economy, especially workers and their representatives, anticipate changes in work conditions and hold the platforms accountable for the promised changes listed below.

Swiggy: Swiggy will soon introduce additional features to its existing “Earnings Reforms Policy” which will ensure that all workers earn at least the hourly minimum wage after costs. When implemented, this policy will potentially improve the earnings of around 400,000 workers partnering with Swiggy.³⁹

Zomato: Zomato introduced a management-led channel called ‘Catalyst’ for workers to express collective concerns through their fleet managers. The platform also instituted a policy to ensure that active workers expressing collective concerns, through the listed channels, are heard and are not disadvantaged.



Workers' Stories:

**Natarajan, Male,
Ola, Chennai**

Natarajan is 44 years old, an experienced driver who has been behind the wheel since he was 20. His journey took a turn when he joined as a cab driver in Ola in 2017, captivated by the platform's promises and offers.

While sitting in the driver's seat and reflecting upon his transition from being an independent driver to driving for a platform, he tells us of the complex reality of platform companies. "Corporates [platform companies] make an investment, by investment I mean they evoke the desires of workers in the beginning and, because of that, they [drivers] hope there will be gains. They are actually like *vittal poochi* [winged termites]," he laughs. Like these insects swarming towards a flame, people like him, he says, have succumbed to the promises and offers of platforms. "Once companies gained the trust of the drivers, they began to cut down on the offers and opportunities they gave earlier", he says. "But drivers are stuck there, we have no other way, it is impossible for us to go outside Ola or Uber and form a separate [taxi] stand and run it now."

Reclining in his seat, Natarajan reflects on how the emergence of platforms has changed public behaviour and made it difficult for drivers to go outside these platforms. "The public will prefer the corporate [platform] companies". They think it is trustworthy and safe because the app is constantly tracking and can be called for support in an emergency. He looks up and says, "However, previously [before platform companies came in], drivers were providing cab services, [and] the public did rent them for solo trips, and they called drivers out for four- or five-days tours." He wonders where that trust is gone, "I cannot describe how the trust died out."

When discussing driver support, he compared the situation five years ago to now. He noted that it had become more challenging to voice concerns. Earlier, he could call and explain his issues. But now he has to type everything into the app. The automated AI responses feel impersonal: "there is this same answer, 'We will take into consideration', which makes me feel like they don't care. About the driver, they don't care, but the customer can call and complain." When asked if he had ever tried to appeal an unsatisfactory AI response, he shook his head. "If some 'person' had spoken to me, then, I would have been able to discuss the next step, like there is this problem, and ask them for clarity." But with automated responses, he feels disconnected, as there is no one to speak to and he has to face everything on his own. Natarajan's story reflects the struggles of countless drivers caught in the web of platform promises, shifting public behaviour, and impersonal support systems.

Names changed to protect worker identity*

Pradeep, Male, Swiggy, Thiruvananthapuram

Since returning from Singapore six years ago, where he was a machine operator at a company that manufactured titanium products, 54-year-old Pradeep has been working full-time on Swiggy in Thiruvananthapuram. Pradeep decided to join Swiggy while looking for employment to sustain himself and his family.

Among the features that lured him to take up platform work, flexibility was the most attractive. He stated, “In this [job], we don’t have any age limitations. And there is nobody to control you. We can work on days we like and pause on days we don’t. There are some [benefits] like this... there is nobody to question [us].”

Today, however, he says conditions are dire. Rising costs, and the modest, unpredictable earnings force Pradeep to work 14 hours a day, seven days a week, to make ends meet. He highlighted the disparity between costs and earnings by observing, “Six years ago fuel was INR 56 a litre, and the fare was INR 25 per order. Today, fuel costs INR 108 a litre. But [fares on] Swiggy are unchanged at INR 25. It [the platform] is not increasing it for us.”

Pradeep says his monthly income on the platform is not enough to sustain his family, “We earn [on average] INR 500-600 daily or around INR 15,000 a month. To be honest, this is not enough. But there is no other way.” He emphasised the significant work-related costs, particularly fuel expenses, that he has to bear. Explaining these costs, Pradeep says, “Swiggy gives us INR 650. That is, from INR 1000 [average daily order earnings plus an additional incentive], INR 650 is what we get after deducting fuel [costs]. From INR 650, 200 goes towards our food [expenses], and we are left with INR 450. It is for this INR 450 that we are struggling... for 14 hours. There is no benefit.”

Given the conditions he’s subject to, and the earnings he takes home, Pradeep believes workers are exploited by Swiggy. He says, “There is a high level of exploitation. This is like a parasite sucking our blood...! We spend money, driving our own vehicles... up to 200-odd kilometres every day. In this [arrangement], he [the platform] is not paying for the fuel or maintenance of the bike.”

When asked why he chose to remain on the platform, Pradeep explained “It’s my fate. I feel sad when I say this because I’ve been suffering for 5-6 years in this heat. I have to. I have no other option.”

Pradeep’s story is not unique. Most platform workers face significant work-related costs such as fuel, vehicle maintenance and insurance, and data, which reduce their take-home income. This often forces workers to work long hours, putting their health and safety at risk. Pradeep’s story underscores the need for platforms to ensure workers are paid fairly.

Names changed to protect worker identity*

Structuring time, limiting flexibility: From gigs to ‘GIGS’

In 2022, a new system of allocating work on digital platforms was launched in India. This system, termed GIGS by a platform required workers to book and commit, in advance, to fixed work slots.⁴⁰

The new system tightened any notion of flexibility workers perceived they had in platform work. Prior to the slot-based system, platforms in India offered ‘flexible work’ by letting workers log in whenever they wanted, and for however long they wanted. In practice, workers’ ability to make a livelihood even then was tied to various incentives and performance criteria specified by the platform, such as on-time delivery of orders, completion of gigs, availability during peak demand, or ratings by customers.

By 2024, many platforms had adopted the slot-based system, although the distribution and duration of slots varied between platforms. With this shift, the mask of flexibility came off platform work. To the extent flexibility exists, it is now more stringently defined by the platform. The slot-based system furthers the logic of preferential allocation by using performance criteria to categorise platform workers into tiers, and forcing them to compete for slots, with higher tiers being given higher priority, as described below.

Platforms argue that the shift to the slot-based system is to ensure operational efficiency,⁴¹ and to enhance worker payouts.⁴² A critical aspect of ensuring operational efficiency using a slot-based system is managing the supply of workers, although our findings demonstrate that enhanced worker payouts for all workers is not guaranteed.

Despite the platforms’ claim to “Choose your delivery work hours according to your convenience,”⁴³ a male food delivery worker in Delhi told us “I don’t like the system, because earlier we could just log in whenever we want. Now if I am available from 12:30, I have to wait for half an hour because the gig slot will only start at 1 PM.”⁴⁴ Since the duration of slots are defined by platforms, workers have to commit to fixed hours, which goes against the notion of flexibility, as a male ride-hailing worker from the same city explained: “My shift is of 12 hours, and I get 2 hours rest in between. The minimum slot one can book is of 8 hours. There is no option of a 4-hour slot. The shortest slot is 8 hours.”⁴⁵ Another male food delivery worker from the same city added, “Slots are of 4 hours. One slot is from 12-4, then 4-7, then 7-11, and 11-3 AM, then 3-5 AM. We have to book slots. Without slots if we just come online, we won’t get orders.”⁴⁶ A female beautician in Bangalore told us she mandatorily committed 220 hours a month and that “On Saturday and Sunday, we must mark the calendar for 13 hours. On weekdays, I log in at 8 am and log out by 6 pm.”⁴⁷ This worker also talked about a feature on the app that denies them the option to refuse jobs that they are uncomfortable with, or unprepared to accept, thereby reducing their agency even further.

Further constraints on flexibility are imposed as platforms tie the slot-based system to incentives and payout. As pointed out by a male food delivery worker in Chennai, “Earlier, timing was flexible. We could join and leave the platform freely, [and] earlier, incentive wasn’t fixed to the shift.”⁴⁸ A male grocery delivery worker in Delhi elaborated “Everyone has to work an 8-hour shift. After that, it’s your choice if you want to give more hours, but a minimum 8-hour shift is required. If we complete our shift of 8 hours daily in the week, then we get INR 3000 for shift attendance apart from what we earn.”⁴⁹ A male food delivery worker in Thiruvananthapuram added, “To get the weekly incentive, we have to take 80 gigs [slots] which is one hour each. So we must work 80 gigs and take 95 orders in a week. Then we get an additional INR 4000 [weekly]...but we must...work between 12-2 pm and 7-9 pm.”⁵⁰ Another male worker in Bangalore describes how, “there are specific incentive targets for daily deliveries, and there are set rules for each incentive. It increases with every milestone I pass.”⁵¹ Workers in different categories are prioritised differently for grievance redressal, loss of pay, and insurance schemes.

Should workers be unable to adhere to the requirements of the slot-based system, even due to unforeseen circumstances, they face swift and severe penalties. On a logistics platform, for instance, a male worker in Delhi mentioned that workers have to login for at least “70 hours a week and maintain 85% acceptance rate.”⁵² When these conditions are not met, workers on the platform are embargoed and only able to accept orders after a 10-20 second delay. The worker said that he faced this delay when he returned after a visit to his village. He argued that other delivery partners would pick up the order in those 10-20 seconds, and asked, “Now you tell me, if we can’t accept orders till 10 seconds, how will we maintain 85% acceptance rate?”

Similarly, a male ride-hailing worker in Delhi described the penalties he faces, “If we book slots but then don’t show up, there is a penalty; and, apart from that, they might make you sit at home or demote you. This happened to me because I had to go home due to an emergency. We have to book slots on Thursday, and we have time till Saturday to cancel the slots. However, I received a call on Saturday night about an emergency and I had to go to my village immediately. I informed my hub manager and requested that this week’s slot be cancelled, as the cancellation option on my app had expired by then.

They did not cancel it and, when I returned, they removed my premium slots and demoted me. Earlier, the slots available to me were only premium slots, now that option [has] been removed from [my] booking system. I was otherwise happy in this job, but after this incident, I am feeling bad. I had to pay penalty of INR 450 also. That I am okay with, I can understand that it’s company policy. But why remove the slots?”⁵³

WORKERS IN DIFFERENT CATEGORIES ARE PRIORITISED DIFFERENTLY FOR GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL, LOSS OF PAY, AND INSURANCE SCHEMES.

The slot-based system is emblematic of the changes in how workers’ time is managed by platforms. Fairwork India’s research over the past six years reveals that, contrary to continued claims about platform work offering autonomy and flexibility to workers to choose when, for how long, and what jobs to work, their ability to make these choices has only narrowed. This change shows how platform work’s promise of flexibility has, over time, led to “de-flexibilization”,⁵⁴ thereby raising the question: are platform workers indeed “gig” workers?

MOVING FORWARD

Platform Changes

This section brings together the changes that platforms have agreed to make in their policies and practices, in consultation with Fairwork India, to improve the conditions of their workers.

Fair Conditions:

BluSmart introduced an accident insurance at no additional cost to all its workers. BluSmart also instituted a formal policy on Loss of Standing to ensure that workers who go on leave from the platform are not penalised upon their return, thereby safeguarding their standing upon rejoining the workforce.

Fair Contracts:

Swiggy has committed to compensating workers for income losses incurred due to app malfunctions or failures within the platform's systems or networks during the period of their login hours.

Fair Management:

To create an equitable work environment, bigbasket's anti-discrimination policies now include corrective measures such as blocking customers who engage in discriminatory behaviour towards workers. Amazon also instituted an anti-retaliation policy, ensuring that workers are not disadvantaged for raising concerns or appealing disciplinary decisions.

Zepto and Zomato have institutionalised regular external audits of their algorithms reducing the likelihood of algorithmic bias against workers.



Pathways to Change

The Fairwork project's growing relevance to debates on platform work in India continued in its sixth year. This included not just engaging with platforms, but also engagement with other stakeholders including trade unions, regulators, researchers and consumers.

In the process, Fairwork India actively contributed to discussions around platform regulations, in Karnataka, Jharkhand and Kerala, as mentioned in the Editorial and the Legal Context. While these draft bills attempt to address certain issues faced by platform workers, the state needs to do more. To date, no legislation in India has adequately addressed either the question of a minimum wage and long working hours, or the lack of collective bargaining rights,⁵⁵ which lie at the heart of "flexploitation".⁵⁶

At the discussions, Fairwork India has presented the findings from six years of research on the working

conditions on platforms to emphasise the importance of identifying minimum thresholds to define the relationship between platforms and their workers. In identifying these thresholds, the goal has not been to advocate for platforms workers to be classified as employees in an employer–employee relationship but to reduce the acute social asymmetries that characterise the platform work. Indeed, as others have recently pointed out,⁵⁷ and examples from other countries indicate,⁵⁸ the provision of minimal standards for workers does not necessarily mean that their employment status has to change.

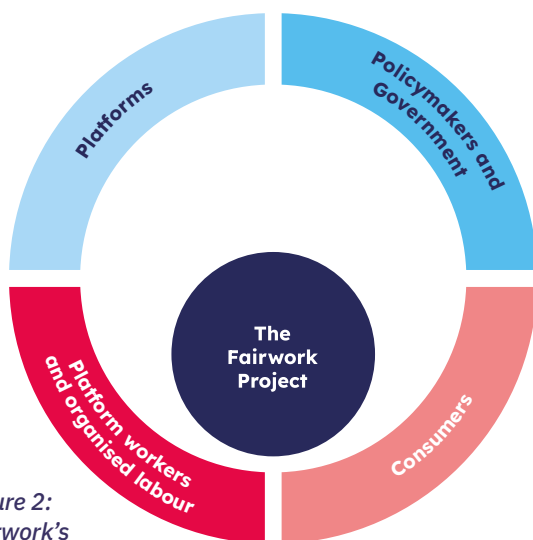


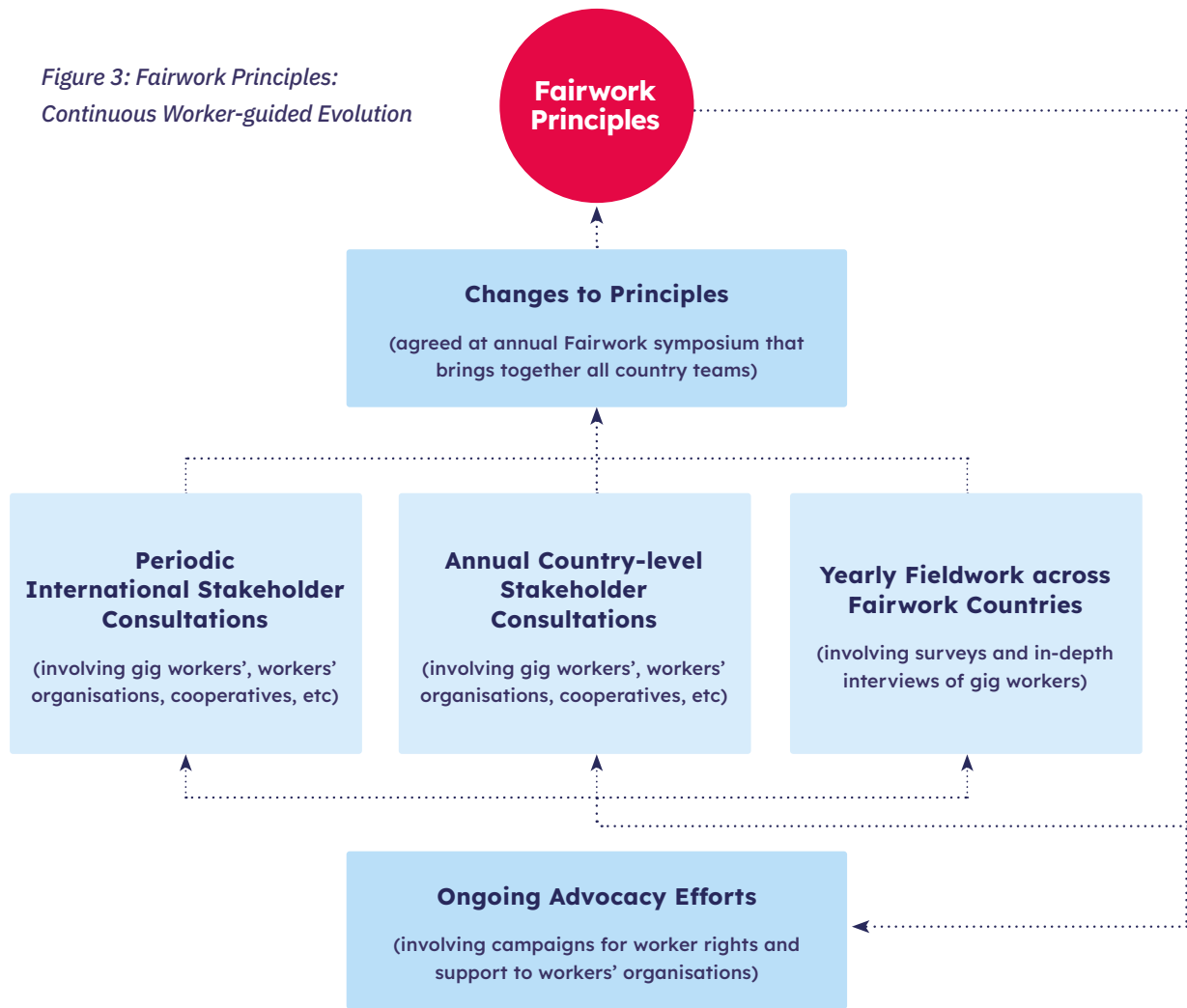
Figure 2:
Fairwork's
Pathways to Change

This continued engagement with platforms, workers, regulators and consumers allows Fairwork to play a vital role in making positive changes to workers' lives.

Additionally, through the Fairwork scores, we also hope to provide conscientious investors a tool and a metric to be intentional about the platform they choose to interact with.

Similarly, the scores also provide ethically minded consumers a tool to make informed decisions when choosing amongst platforms, thus contributing to pressure on platforms to improve their working conditions and their scores. In this way, we also allow both consumers and investors to be workers' allies in the fight for a fairer platform economy. Beyond individual consumer choices, we hope the scores can help inform the procurement, investment, and partnership policies of large organisations. They can serve as a reference for institutions and companies who want to ensure they are supporting fair labour practices.

Figure 3: Fairwork Principles:
Continuous Worker-guided Evolution



There is nothing inevitable about poor working conditions in the platform economy. Despite their claims to the contrary, platforms have substantial control over the nature of the jobs that they mediate. Workers who find their jobs through platforms are ultimately workers, and there is no basis for denying them the rights and protections that their counterparts in the formal sector have long enjoyed. Our scores show that the platform economy, as we know it today, already takes many forms, with some platforms displaying greater concern for workers' needs than others.

This means that we do not accept low pay, poor conditions, inequity, and a lack of agency and voice as the norm. We hope that our work – by highlighting the contours of today's platform economy – paints a picture of what it could become.

The Fairwork Pledge

As part of this process of change, we have introduced the Fairwork pledge. This pledge leverages the power of organisations' procurement, investment, and partnership policies to support fairer platform work. Organisations like universities, schools, businesses, and charities who make use of platform labour can make a difference by supporting the best labour practices, guided by our five principles of fair work. Organisations who sign the pledge get to display our badge on company organisational materials.

The pledge constitutes two levels. This first is as an official Fairwork Supporter, which entails publicly demonstrating support for fairer platform work, and making resources available to staff and members to help them in deciding which platforms to engage with. A second level of the pledge entails organisations committing to concrete and meaningful changes in their own practices as official Fairwork Partners, for example by committing to using better-rated platforms where there is a choice.

MORE INFORMATION ON THE PLEDGE, AND HOW TO SIGN UP, IS AVAILABLE AT

WWW.FAIR.WORK/PLEDGE



APPENDIX I

Fairwork Scoring System

Which companies are covered by the Fairwork principles?

The ILO defines a “digital labour platform” as an enterprise that mediates and facilitates “labour exchange between different users, such as businesses, workers and consumers”. That includes digital labour “marketplaces” where “businesses set up the tasks and requirements and the platforms match these to a global pool of workers who can complete the tasks within the specified time”.⁶⁰ Marketplaces that do not facilitate labour exchanges - for example, Airbnb (which matches owners of accommodation with those seeking to rent short term accommodation) and eBay (which matches buyers and sellers of goods) are obviously excluded from the definition. The ILO’s definition of “digital labour platform” is widely accepted and includes many different business models.⁶¹

Fairwork’s research covers digital labour platforms that fall within this definition that aim to connect individual service providers with consumers of the service through the platform interface. Fairwork’s research does not cover platforms that mediate offers of employment between individuals and employers (whether on a long-term or on a temporary basis).

Fairwork distinguishes between two types of these platforms. The first, is ‘geographically tethered’ platforms where the work is required to be done in a particular location such as delivering food from a restaurant to an

apartment, driving a person from one part of town to another or cleaning. These are often referred to as ‘gig work platforms’. The second is ‘cloudwork’ platforms where the work can, in theory, be performed from any location via the internet.

The thresholds for meeting each principle are different for location-based and cloudwork platforms because location-based work platforms can be benchmarked against local market factors, risks/harms, and regulations that apply in that country, whereas cloudwork platforms cannot because (by their nature) the work can be performed from anywhere and so different market factors, risks/harms, and regulations apply depending on where the work is performed.

The platforms covered by Fairwork’s research have different business, revenue and governance models including employment-based, subcontractor, commission-based, franchise, piece-rate, shift-based, subscription models. Some of those models involve the platforms making direct payments to workers (including through sub-contractors).

How does the scoring system work?





















The five Principles of Fairwork were developed through an extensive review of research on job quality, stakeholder meetings at UNCTAD and the ILO in Geneva (involving platform operators, policymakers, trade unions, and academics), and in-country meetings with local stakeholders.

Each Fairwork Principle is divided into two points. Accordingly, for each Principle, the scoring system allows the first to be awarded corresponding to the first threshold, and an additional second point to be awarded corresponding to the second threshold (see Table 1). The second point under each Principle can only be awarded if the first point for that Principle has been awarded.

The thresholds specify the evidence required for a platform to receive a given point. Where no verifiable evidence is available that meets a given threshold, the platform is not awarded that point.

A platform can therefore receive a maximum Fairwork score of 10 points. Fairwork scores are updated on a yearly basis; the scores presented in this report were derived from data pertaining to the eight months between January 2024 and August 2024 and are valid until October 2025.

Table 1 Fairwork: Scoring System

Principle	First point	Second point	Total
 Principle 1: Fair Pay	 Ensures workers earn at least the local minimum wage after costs	 Ensures workers earn at least a local living wage after costs	 2
 Principle 2: Fair Conditions	 Mitigates task-specific risks	 Ensures safe working conditions and a safety net	 2
 Principle 3: Fair Contracts	 Provides clear and transparent terms and conditions	 Ensures that no unfair contract terms are imposed	 2
 Principle 4: Fair Management	 Provides due process for decisions affecting workers	 Provides equity in the management process	 2
 Principle 5: Fair Representation	 Assures freedom of association and the expression of worker voice	 Supports democratic governance	 2

Maximum possible Fairwork Score



Principle 1: Fair Pay

1.1 - Ensures workers earn at least the local minimum wage after costs (one point)

Platform workers often have substantial work-related costs to cover, such as transport between jobs, supplies, or fuel, insurance, and maintenance on a vehicle. Workers' costs sometimes mean their take-home earnings may fall below the local minimum wage. Workers also absorb the costs of extra time commitment, when they spend time waiting or travelling between jobs, or other unpaid activities necessary for their work, such as mandatory training, which are also considered active hours. To achieve this point platforms must ensure that work-related costs do not push workers below local minimum wage.

The platform takes appropriate steps to ensure both of the following:

- Payment must be on time and in-full.
- Workers earn at least the local minimum wage, or the wage set by collective sectoral agreement (whichever is higher) in the place where they work, in their active hours, after costs⁶⁴.

1.2 - Ensures workers earn at least a local living wage after costs (one additional point)

In some places, the minimum wage is not enough to allow workers to afford a basic but decent standard of living. To achieve this point platforms must ensure that work-related costs do not push workers below local living wage.

The platform takes appropriate steps to ensure the following:

- Workers earn at least a local living wage, or the wage set by collective sectoral agreement (whichever is higher) in the place where they work, in their active hours, after costs.⁶⁵

Principle 2: Fair Conditions

2.1 Mitigates task-specific risks (one point)

Platform workers may encounter a number of risks in the course of their work, including accidents and injuries, harmful materials, and crime and violence. To achieve this point platforms must show that they are aware of these risks and take basic steps to mitigate them.

The platform must satisfy the following:

- Adequate equipment and training are provided to protect workers' health and safety from task-specific risks.⁶⁶

These should be implemented at no additional cost to the worker.

- The platform mitigates the risks of lone working by providing adequate support and designing processes with occupational safety and health in mind.

2.2 - Ensures safe working conditions and a safety net (one additional point)

Platform workers are vulnerable to the possibility of abruptly losing their income as the result of unexpected or external circumstances, such as sickness or injury. Most countries provide a social safety net to ensure workers don't experience sudden poverty due to circumstances outside their control. However, platform workers usually don't qualify for protections such as sick pay, because of their independent contractor status. In recognition of the fact that most workers are dependent on income they earn from platform work, platforms should ensure that workers are compensated for loss of income due to inability to work. In addition, platforms must minimise the risk of sickness and injury even when all the basic steps have been taken.

The platform must satisfy ALL of the following:

- Platforms take meaningful steps to ensure that workers do not suffer significant costs as a result of accident, injury or disease resulting from work.
- Workers should be compensated for income loss due to inability to work commensurate with the worker's average earnings over the past three months.
- Where workers are unable to work for an extended period due to unexpected circumstances, their standing on the platform is not negatively impacted.
- The platform implements policies or practices that protect workers' safety from task-specific risks.⁶⁷ In particular, the platform should ensure that pay is not structured in a way that incentivizes workers to take excessive levels of risk.

Principle 3: Fair Contracts

3.1 Provides clear and transparent terms and conditions (one point)

The terms and conditions governing platform work are not always clear and accessible to workers⁶⁸. To achieve this point, the platform must demonstrate that workers are able to understand, agree to, and access the conditions of their work at all times, and that they have legal recourse if the other party breaches those conditions.

The platform must satisfy ALL of the following:

- The party contracting with the worker must be identified in the contract, and subject to the law of the place in which the worker works.
- The contract/terms & conditions are presented in full in clear and comprehensible language that all workers could be expected to understand.
- Workers have to sign a contract and/or give informed consent to terms of conditions upon signing up for the platform.
- The contracts/terms and conditions are easily accessible to workers in paper form, or via the app/platform interface at all times.
- Contracts/terms & conditions do not include clauses that reverse prevailing legal frameworks in the respective countries.
- Platforms take adequate, responsible and ethical data protection and management measures, laid out in a documented policy.

3.2 – Ensures that no unfair contract terms are imposed (one additional point)

In some cases, especially under ‘independent contractor’ classifications, workers carry a disproportionate amount of risk for engaging in a contract with the service user. They may be liable for any damage arising in the course of their work, and they may be prevented by unfair clauses from seeking legal redress for grievances. To achieve this point, platforms must demonstrate that risks and liability of engaging in the work is shared between parties.

Regardless of how the contractual status of the worker is classified, the platform must satisfy ALL of the following:

- Every worker is notified of proposed changes in clear and understandable language within a reasonable timeframe before changes come into effect; and the changes should not reverse existing accrued benefits and reasonable expectations on which workers have relied.
- The contract/terms and conditions neither include clauses which exclude liability for negligence nor unreasonably exempt the platform from liability for working conditions. The platform takes appropriate steps to ensure that the contract does not include clauses which prevent workers from effectively seeking redress for grievances which arise from the working relationship.

- In case platform labour is mediated by subcontractors: The platform implements a reliable mechanism to monitor and ensure that the subcontractor is living up to the standards expected from the platform itself regarding working conditions.
- In cases where there is dynamic pricing used for services, the data collected, and calculations used to allocate payment must be transparent and documented in a form available to workers.

Principle 4: Fair Management

4.1 Provides due process for decisions affecting workers (one point)

Platform workers can experience arbitrary deactivation; being barred from accessing the platform without explanation, and potentially losing their income. Workers may be subject to other penalties or disciplinary decisions without the ability to contact the service user or the platform to challenge or appeal them if they believe they are unfair. To achieve this point, platforms must demonstrate an avenue for workers to meaningfully appeal disciplinary actions.

The platform must satisfy ALL of the following:

- There is an easily accessible channel for workers to communicate with a human representative of the platform and to effectively solve problems. This channel is documented in the contract and available on the platform interface. Platforms should respond to workers within a reasonable timeframe. There is a process for workers to meaningfully and effectively appeal low ratings, non-payment, payment issues, deactivations, and other penalties and disciplinary actions. This process is documented in a contract and available on the platform interface⁶⁹.
- In the case of deactivations, the appeals process must be available to workers who no longer have access to the platform.
- Workers are not disadvantaged for voicing concerns or appealing disciplinary actions.

4.2 – Provides equity in the management process (one additional point)

The majority of platforms do not actively discriminate against particular groups of workers. However, they may inadvertently exacerbate already existing inequalities in their design and management. For example, there is a lot of gender segregation between different types of platform work. To achieve this point, platforms must show not only that they have policies against discrimination, but also that they seek to remove barriers for disadvantaged groups and promote inclusion.

Platforms must satisfy ALL of the following:

- The platform has an effective anti-discrimination policy laying out a clear process for reporting, correcting and penalising discrimination of workers on the platform on grounds such as race, social origin, caste, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sex, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, religion or belief, age or any other status.⁷⁰
- The platform has measures in place to promote diversity, equality and inclusion on the platform. It takes practical measures to promote equality of opportunity for workers from disadvantaged groups, including reasonable accommodation for pregnancy, disability, and religion or belief.
- Where persons from a disadvantaged group (such as women) are significantly under-represented among a pool of workers, it seeks to identify and remove barriers to access by persons from that group.
- If algorithms are used to determine access to work or remuneration or the type of work and pay scales available to workers seeking to use the platform, these are transparent and do not result in inequitable outcomes for workers from historically or currently disadvantaged groups.
- It has mechanisms to reduce the risk of users discriminating against workers from disadvantaged groups in accessing and carrying out work.

Principle 5: Fair Representation

5.1 Assures freedom of association and the expression of worker voice (one point)

Freedom of association is a fundamental right for all workers and enshrined in the constitution of the International Labour Organisation, and the Universal

Declaration of Human Rights. The right for workers to organise, collectively express their wishes – and importantly – be listened to, is an important prerequisite for fair working conditions. However, rates of organisation amongst platform workers remain low. To achieve this point, platforms must ensure that the conditions are in place to encourage the expression of collective worker voice.

Platforms must satisfy ALL of the following:

- There is a documented mechanism⁷¹ for the expression of collective worker voice that allows ALL workers, regardless of employment status, to participate without risks.
- There is a formal, written statement of willingness to recognise, and bargain with, a collective, independent body of workers or trade union, that is clearly communicated to all workers, and available on the platform interface.⁷²
- Freedom of association is not inhibited, and workers are not disadvantaged in any way for communicating their concerns, wishes and demands to the platform, or expressing willingness to form independent collective bodies of representation.⁷³

5.2 Supports democratic governance (one additional point)

While rates of organisation remain low, platform workers' associations are emerging in many sectors and countries. We are also seeing a growing number of cooperative worker-owned platforms. To realise fair representation, workers must have a say in the conditions of their work. This could be through a democratically governed cooperative model, a formally recognised union, or the ability to undertake collective bargaining with the platform.

The platform must satisfy at least ONE of the following:

1. Workers play a meaningful role in governing it.
2. In a written document available at all times on the platform interface, the platform publicly and formally recognises an independent collective body of workers, an elected works council, or trade union. This recognition is not exclusive and, when the legal framework allows, the platform should recognise any significant collective body seeking representation⁷⁴.

APPENDIX II: OPERATIONALISING DATA GATHERING IN INDIA

This year, 11 platforms that provided location-based platform work in India were identified based on the size of their workforce, the services they offered, their consumer base, and the investment they had attracted. For each of these platforms, worker interviews were conducted, evidence from management was sought, and desk research was carried out. While the project initially identified, and began collecting data for 12 platforms, a decision was taken to drop Dunzo, a logistics service platform. This is because the team had difficulties recruiting enough workers across the various cities, a reflection of the platform's uncertain future.⁷⁵

We conducted 440 worker case studies, with 40 workers per platform, across five cities, Bangalore, Chennai, Delhi, Kochi and Thiruvananthapuram, between March and July 2024. Fairwork expanded fieldwork to Chennai this year after the Tamil Nadu Planning Commission expressed interest in research to support regulatory initiatives for platform workers in the state. However, the research in Chennai received no financial support from the Tamil Nadu Planning Commission. The goal of the interviews was to build an understanding of the conditions and process of work in the platform economy, how it is carried out and managed, and its evolution over the years. Interviews were conducted by six research associates with input from other team members. In parallel, platforms were contacted for evidence on conditions of work, including data on their workers, and examples of management action across the principles. Finally, input from secondary sources including government notifications, news articles, reports, social media, and academic publications were taken into account.

Government notifications, for instance, were used to determine the minimum wage figures. In Bangalore, data from the Government of Karnataka's Labour department were used to determine the hourly minimum wage figures for semi-skilled and skilled categories (domestic services). The hourly minimum wage figures are INR 78.19⁷⁶ and INR 84.32 respectively.⁷⁷

In Chennai, data from the Tamil Nadu Labour Welfare and Skill Development Department were used to determine the hourly minimum wage. The hourly minimum wage figures are INR 67 for electricians, plumbers, and carpenters, and 67.5 for beauticians,⁷⁸ and INR 59.2 for domestic workers.⁷⁹ Similarly, for delivery workers the hourly minimum wages are INR 66.59⁸⁰ and INR 123.4 for transport workers.⁸¹

In Delhi, data from the Government of the National Capital Territory were used to determine the hourly minimum wage figures for semi-skilled and skilled categories (domestic services). The hourly minimum wage figures are INR 92.75 and INR 102 respectively.⁸²

In Kochi and Thiruvananthapuram, data from the Government of Kerala's Labour and Skills Department were used to determine the hourly minimum wage figures.⁸³ In Kochi, the hourly minimum wage is INR 63.79 for delivery workers, INR 75 for cab drivers, INR 64.8 for electricians, INR 65.1 for AC technicians and INR 60.7 for cleaners. In Thiruvananthapuram, the hourly minimum wage is INR 67.04 for delivery workers, INR 78 for cab drivers, INR 68.05 for electricians, INR 68.44 for AC technicians and INR 84 for cleaners.

The living wage figures were obtained from the WageIndicator Foundation in 2024.⁸⁴ Region-specific data and the upper end of the range for "typical family (urban)" was used for Delhi, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu as applicable.

Efforts were made to capture as much variety among workers as possible. For the domestic service platform Urban Company, the aim was to cover multiple occupations on the platform (AC and appliance, carpentry, cleaning, electrical repair, plumbing, and salon). Similarly, for ride-hailing platforms, a variety of cab categories (hatchback, sedan, SUV, and EVs) were included across the different locations in the studied cities. Where possible, attempts were made to speak to under-represented groups, such as women in the delivery and ride-hailing sectors.

Workers were recruited directly by Fairwork India for interviews, and not through platforms, to ensure that responses were independent, and that they would not suffer retaliation from the platform. Workers were either recruited through our social networks by snowballing or by using their services. In cases where the total number of workers on a particular platform was limited in a city, we contacted and interviewed a few workers who took part in previous years' research. This allowed us to also observe changes in the worker's experience on the platform over the years and hold platforms accountable for any commitments they previously made. In all cases, workers were interviewed only after explaining the study and securing their informed consent to participate. Interviews were conducted face-to-face, or by phone, depending on the schedule and convenience of interviewed workers. When workers were recruited by using their services, they were asked if they would participate in the study once the transaction was complete. Participants in the study were compensated monetarily, or by purchasing additional services as suggested by the participants. 85 participants declined compensation.

Credits and Funding

Fairwork is a project run out of the Oxford Internet Institute, University of Oxford, and the Berlin Social Science Center, and draws on the expertise and experience of staff at Access to Knowledge for Development Center (A2K4D) at the American University in Cairo's School of Business, Audencia Business School, Center for Development Evaluation and Social Science Research (CREDI), Centre for Labour Research, Chinese University of Hong Kong's Centre for Social Innovation Studies, CIPG Innovation Policy Governance, CIPPEC, De La Salle University, FLACSO-Ecuador, Humboldt University of Berlin, Institute for a Fair Economy, International Institute of Information Technology Bangalore (IIITB), International University of Rabat, iSocial, KU Leuven, Lagos Business School, Luigj Gurakuqi University of Shkodër, National University of Singapore, Observatorio de Plataformas Perú, Phenix Center for Economics & Informatics Studies, Policy, Public Policy Research Center (CENTAR), Qhala, REPOA, Sapienza University of Rome, Solidarity Center, TEDIC, The Policy Initiative, TU Wien, Universidad Adolfo Ibáñez, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Universidad del Rosario, Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos (Unisinós), University of California's Hastings College of the Law, University of Cape Town, University of Manchester and the University of the Western Cape.

Authors:

Balaji Parthasarathy, Janaki Srinivasan, Mounika Neerukonda, Bilahari M, Raktima Kalita, Meghashree Balaraj, Tony Mathew, Aditya Singh, Alessio Bertolini and Mark Graham.

Fairwork team:

Jana Ababneh, Eisha Afifi, Wirawan Agahari, Iftikhar Ahmad, Tariq Ahmed, Shamarukh Alam, María Belen Albornoz, Luis Pablo Alonzo, Oğuz Alyanak, Hayford Amegbe, Branka Andjelkovic, Marcos Aragão, María Arnal, Arturo Arriagada, Daniel Arubayi, Sami Atallah, Tat Chor Au-Yeung, Ahmad Awad, Razan Ayesha, Meghashree Balaraj, Joshua Baru, Ladin Bayurgil, Ariane Berthoin Antal, Alessio Bertolini, Wasel Bin Shadat, Virgel Binghay, Ameline Bordas, Maren Borkert, Álvaro Briales, Lola Brittain, Joe Buckley, Callum Cant, Rodrigo Carelli, Eiser Carnero Apaza, Eduardo Carrillo, Maria Catherine, Chris King Chi Chan, Henry Chavez, Ana Chkareuli, Andrea Ciarini, Antonio Corasaniti, Pamela Custodio,

Adriansyah Dhani Darmawan, Olayinka David-West, Luisa De Vita, Alejandra S. Y. Dinegro Martínez, Brikena Kapisyzi Dionizi, Ha Do, Matías Dodel, Marta D'Onofrio, Elisa Drishti, Veena Dubal, James Dunn-Willimason, Khatia Dzamukashvili, Pablo Egaña, Dana Elbashbishy, Batoul ElMehdar, Elisa Errico, Úrsula Espinoza Rodríguez, Patrick Feuerstein, Roseli Figaro, Milena Franke, Sandra Fredman, Farah Galal, Jackeline Gameleira, Pía Garavaglia, Chana Garcia, Navneet Gidda, Shikoh Gitau, Slobodan Golusin, Eloísa González, Mark Graham, Rafael Grohmann, Martin Gruber-Risak, Francisca Gutiérrez Crocco, Seemab Haider, Khadiga Hassan, Richard Heeks, Sopo Japaridze, Mabel Rocío Hernández Díaz, Luis Jorge Hernández Flores, Victor Manuel Hernandez Lopez, Nur Huda, Huynh Thi Ngoc Tuyet, Francisco Ibáñez, Neema Iyer, Tanja Jakobi, Athar Jameel, Abdul Bashiru Jibril, Zoe Johnson, Ermira Hoxha Kalaj, Raktima Kalita, Revaz Karanadze, Zeynep Karlidağ, Lucas Katera, Bresena Dema Kopliku, Maja Kovac, Zuzanna Kowalik, Anjali Krishan, Martin Krzywdzinski, Amela Kurta, Ilma Kurtović, Morad Kutkut, Tobias Kuttler, Arturo Lahera-Sánchez, Jorge Leyton, Annika Lin, Georgina Lubke, Bilahari M, Raiyaan Mahbub, Wassim Maktabi, Oscar Javier Maldonado, Laura Clemencia Mantilla León, Claudia Marà, Ana Flavia Marques, Margreta Medina, Pablo Meseguer, Arabella Miller-Wang, Rusudan Moseshvili, Jamal Msami, Karol Muszyński, Hilda Mwakatumbula, Beka Natsvlishvili, Mounika Neerukonda, Ana Negro, Chau Nguyen Thi Minh, Sidra Nizambuddin, Claudia Nociolini Rebecchi, Bonnita Nyamwire, Michelle Ogolla, Oluwatobi A. Ogunmokun, Frederick Pobee, Daviti Omsarashvili, Caroline A Omware, Nermin Oruc, Christian Nedu Osakwe, Balaji Parthasarathy, Francesca Pasqualone, María Inés Martínez Penadés, Leonhard Plank, Frederick Pobee, Valeria Pulignano, Jack Linchuan Qiu, Jayvy R. Gamboa, Ananya Raihan, Antonio Ramírez, Juan-Carlos Revilla, Ambreen Riaz, Alberto Riesco-Sanz, Nagla Rizk, Moisés K. Rojas Ramos, Federico Rosenbaum Carli, Cheryll Ruth Soriano, Julice Salvagni, Derly Yohanna Sánchez Vargas, Maricarmen Sequera, Murali Shanmugavelan, Aditya Singh, Shanza Sohail, Janaki Srinivasan, Anna Sting, Isabella Stratta, Zuly Bibiana Suárez Morales, David Sutcliffe, Luke Troynar, Didem Özkiziltan Wagenführer.

External scoring reviewers:

Patrick Feuerstein, Cheryl Ruth Soriano, Derly Yohanna Sanchez Vargas

Editing:

David Sutcliffe

Please cite as:

Fairwork. (2024). Fairwork India Ratings 2024: Labour Standards in the Platform Economy. Bangalore, India; Oxford, United Kingdom.

Please note that this report contains sections in common with other Fairwork reports, notably the Fairwork Framework, parts of the Moving Forward section and the Appendix.

Report design:

One Ltd.

Communications and typesetting:

Zoe Johnson, Creative Mouse

Funders:

This report was funded by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), commissioned by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

Special thanks to: Katia Padvalkava, Duncan Passey, Maisy Gills, Sara Spinks, Lucy Hennings, Isabelle Malcolm, Philip Hind, Ornella Sciuto, Caroline Hampshire, Tabitha Baker, and David Sutcliffe at the University of Oxford for their extensive

administrative support for the project since its inception. The project team is deeply grateful to Shakhlo Kakharova, Lukas Sonnenberg, and Maren Bernlöhr, Miriam Oliver at GIZ for their continuing support and guidance as we take our work to the next stage.

IIITB provided the ideal home for the project. Thanks to the Dean (R&D), faculty colleagues, and the administrative staff, led by the Registrar S. R. Sridhar, the Executive Officer (Office of Research) J. V. Prasad, and the Chief Finance Officer S. Piramanayagam for their unfailing support in various ways. A special word of thanks to faculty colleagues and researchers at IIITB's Center for Information Technology and Public Policy (CITAPP) for providing a stimulating intellectual environment. Fairwork acknowledges the help provided by the transcription and translation agency, D'well Informatics and Services Pvt. Ltd., and PR agency K2 Communication Pvt. Ltd.

Finally, we are grateful to all the workers who took time off their schedules to share their experiences with us. We also acknowledge the platform managements at Amazon Flex, bigbasket, BluSmart, Swiggy, Urban Company, Zepto and Zomato for taking the time to share evidence on their practices. We look forward to continuing our engagement with them.

Conflict of interest statement:

None of the researchers have any connection with any of the platforms and the work undertaken received no funding or support in kind from any platform or any other company, and we declare that there is no conflict of interest.

A COLLABORATION BETWEEN



FUNDED BY



ENDNOTES

1. G20. (2023) G20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration. Available at: <https://www.mea.gov.in/Images/CPV/G20-New-Delhi-Leaders-Declaration.pdf> (Accessed: 11 September 2024).
2. Available at: https://prsindia.org/files/bills_acts/acts_states/rajasthan/2023/Act29of2023Rajasthan.pdf (Accessed: 12 August 2024).
3. The Union Government passed the Code on Social Security (COSS) in 2020, which for the first time defined 'gig worker' and 'platform worker', and enumerated provisions to extend social security measures. Available at: ss_code_gazette.pdf (labour.gov.in) (Accessed: 12 August 2024).
4. The manifesto of the Bharatiya Janata Party states that "Our *Shramik bandhus* are major contributors to the progress of Bharat. We will empower our *Shramik Bandhus* with the aim to provide the best opportunities and facilitate ease of working for all workers including gig workers, truck drivers, porters, domestic workers, and street vendors, among others" (p.28), and "We will work with platforms for registration of Gig workers on eShram and reach out to such *shramik bandhus* to help them avail the benefits of various programmes that they are eligible for" (p.29). Available at: https://www.bjp.org/files/inline-documents/Modi-Ki-Guarantee-Sankalp-Patra-English_0.pdf (Accessed: 11 September 2024). The manifesto of the Indian National Congress promises that "We will make a law to specify and protect the rights of gig workers and unorganised workers and enhance their social security" (p.20). Available at: https://manifesto.inc.in/assets/Congress-Manifesto-English-2024-Dyoxp_4E.pdf (Accessed: 11 September 2024). The e-Shram portal is a digital registry rolled out by the Union Government on 26th August 2021, for all unorganised workers including 'gig and platform workers'. Available at: <https://eshram.gov.in/e-shram-portal> (Accessed: 30 September 2024).
5. Available at: <https://ksuwssb.karnataka.gov.in/storage/pdf-files/draftnotification.pdf> (Accessed: 12 September 2024).
6. Department Of Labour, Employment, Training and Skill Development. (2024) The Jharkhand Platform Based Gig Workers (Registration And Welfare) Bill, 2024, Publication No. 430, July 1. Available at: <https://shramadhan.jharkhand.gov.in/ftp/WebAdmin/documents/Gig-worker-social-security.pdf> (Accessed: 12 September 2024).
7. See The Hindu. (2024) Gig workers' Bill will be introduced in next Assembly session: Kerala Minister. August 08. Available at: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/gig-workers-bill-will-be-introduced-in-next-assembly-session-minister/article68498350.ece> (Accessed: 12 September 2024).
8. Internet And Mobile Association of India. (2024) IAMAI submission on Karnataka platform Based Gig Workers (Social Security and Welfare) Bill, 2024. Available at: <https://www.medianama.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Final-IAMAI-Submission-on-Karnataka-Platform-and-Gig-Workers-Bill-2024.pdf> (Accessed: 11 September 2024) (henceforth the IAMAI submission). The following platforms rated by Fairwork India are listed as IAMAI members: Amazon, Ola, Swiggy, Uber, Zepto and Zomato Available at: <https://www.iamai.in/membership>. (Accessed: 12 September 2024).
9. NASSCOM. (2024) Nasscom's feedback on Karnataka govt's Bill for welfare and social security of platform gig workers. *Nasscom Community*. July 11. Available at: <https://community.nasscom.in/communities/public-policy/nasscoms-feedback-karnataka-govts-bill-welfare-and-social-security#> (Accessed: 12 September 2024) (henceforth the NASSCOM submission). The following platforms rated by Fairwork India are members of NASSCOM: Amazon, Flipkart, Porter, Swiggy and Uber. Available at: <https://nasscom.in/members-listing>. (Accessed: 12 September 2024).
10. Sood, N. (2024) Urban Company CEO Abhiraj Bhal defends policies amid gig worker protests. *Moneycontrol*. Available at: <https://www.moneycontrol.com/technology/local-politicians-try-to-gain-mileage-from-gig-worker-protests-urban-company-ceo-abhiraj-bahl-article-12757561.html> (Accessed: 11 September 2024).
11. See Appendix II for details on recruitment of workers for interviews this year.
12. For instance, on 19 January 2024, the Labour Minister of Karnataka called for a meeting to consult with the Fairwork India team and the Bangalore Political Action Committee (BPAC). At the meeting, recommendations based on Fairwork India's findings between 2021 and 2023 were presented and discussed. On 9 February 2024, another stakeholder meeting was called by the Labour Minister which the Fairwork India team attended. The meeting was also attended by the Bangalore Chamber of Industry and Commerce (BCIC) and representatives of platforms. On 7 March 2024, the Government of Karnataka's Labour Department, and the ILO jointly hosted a consultation on extending social protection to gig and platform workers. See International Labour Organisation. (2024) Govt of Karnataka-ILO organize technical consultation on extending social protection to gig and platform workers. Available at: <https://www.ilo.org/resource/news/govt-karnataka-ilo-organize-technical-consultation-extending-social#:~:text=Given%20that%20several%20states%20are%20in.> (Accessed: 12 September 2024).
13. The Public Interest Litigation filed by IFAT with two platform workers in 2021, to either affirm the employer–employee relationship or to demand recognition of 'gig workers' under the Unorganized Workers Act, 2008. See The Indian Federation of App-based Transport Workers (IFAT) & Ors v Union of India & Ors, W.P.(C) No. 001068/2021 (Supreme Court of India).
14. Varini G and Kumar, A. P. (2024) A draft bill for gig workers and the debate over a definition. *Deccan Herald*. August 05. Available at: <https://www.deccanherald.com/opinion/a-draft-bill-for-gig-workers-and-the-debate-over-a-definition-3136681> (Accessed: 4 September 2024).
15. While the CoSS § 2 (35) defines a gig worker as "a person who performs work or participates in a work arrangement and earns from such activities outside of traditional employer-employee relationship", the Karnataka Draft Bill § 2 (e) reads, "a person who performs work or participates in a work arrangement that results in a given rate of payment, based on terms and conditions laid down in such contract and includes all piece-rate work, and whose work is sourced through a platform, in the sectors specified in the Schedule to this Act". It is worth noting that Karnataka is only following a widespread demand, as articulated by the Standing Committee report of the CoSS, for a more specific and unambiguous definition. See Standing Committee on Labour. 2020. The Code On Social Security, 2019. Ninth Report. Presented To Hon'ble Speaker on 31.07.2020. Lok Sabha Secretariat, New Delhi. p.31.
16. Though state regulation of existing private contractual relationships is unusual, and has been criticised in the NASSCOM submission (p.9), these measures aim to serve a legitimate public purpose and ensure fair contracts in light of the prevalent unequal bargaining positions.
17. According to Karnataka Draft Bill §23, a registered worker, can file a petition for any grievance arising out of entitlements, payments and other benefits provided under this Act, before a grievance redressal officer directly or file a petition through a web portal. This section also provides an appeal against the order before the appellate authority that is to be prescribed by the state government.
18. According to Karnataka Draft Bill, 2024, §24, every aggregator with more than fifty registered workers shall constitute an Internal Dispute Resolution Committee, which is tasked with resolving disputes within thirty days. The section also provides for arbitration to resolve disputes.
19. According to Schedule II of the Karnataka Draft Bill 2024, the eight raisable disputes by the 'gig worker' are: aggregator fails to provide contracts, fails to notify of change in terms of the contract, fails to communicate information sought by the workers, termination happens on ground not mentioned in contract, terminates without notice, fails to provide reasons in pay deductions, fails to make timely compensation and fails to comply with occupational safety and health standards.
20. IAMAI submission. p.1.
21. NASSCOM submission. p.1.
22. *Ibid.* p.8.
23. *Ibid.* p.1.
24. *Ibid.* p.2.
25. *Ibid.* p.10.
26. Burrell, J. (2016) How the machine 'thinks': Understanding opacity in machine learning algorithms. *Big Data and Society*. January-June, 1-12. p. 4. Available at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/2053951715622512>. (Accessed: 19 September 2024).

27. Baiocco, S., Fernández-Macías, E., Rani, U. and Pesole, A. (2022) The algorithmic management of work and its implications in different contexts. Seville: European Commission. JRC129749. Available at: <https://www.ilo.org/media/372856/download> (Accessed: 12 September 2024). See also, van Doorn, N. and Badger, A. (2020) Platform capitalism's hidden abode: Producing data assets in the gig economy. *Antipode*, 52(5), 1475-1495. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12641>
28. IMAI submission, p.2.
29. Chung, J. 2024 The gig is up. *Logics*. Issue 21. Available at <https://logicmag.io/issue-21-medicine-and-the-body/the-gig-is-up/> (Accessed: 11 September 2024).
30. The organisations making the joint submission included The Indian Federation of App-Based Transport Workers (IFAT) and the Vidhi Central for Legal Policy in collaboration with Fairwork and others. See, Comments on the draft Karnataka Platform-based Gig Workers Bill, 2024. Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy. August 08, 2024. Available at: <https://vidhilegalpolicy.in/research/comments-on-the-draft-karnataka-platform-based-gig-workers-bill-2024/>. (Accessed: 15 September 2024).
31. Available at: <https://citapp.iitb.ac.in/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/FairworkIndia-CommentsOnKarnatakaBill-July2024-3.pdf> (Accessed: 15 September 2024).
32. The Hindu. (2024), *op.cit.*
33. See, Ministry of Labour & Employment (2024). Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya chairs meeting with aggregators for providing social security to gig and platform workers. September 18. Available at: <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2056138> (Accessed: 19 September 2024).
34. Samuel, V. J. (2024) Navigating federalism and prioritising workers in India's planned gig worker legislation. *Hindustan Times*. Available at: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/analysis/navigating-federalism-and-prioritising-workers-in-indias-planned-gig-worker-legislation-101726324620704.html>. (Accessed: 19 September 2024).
35. This year, the platforms included Amazon Flex, bigbasket, BluSmart, Swiggy, Urban Company, Zepto and Zomato. The Fairwork project is bound by a non-disclosure agreement with all these platforms. As a consequence, the discussions with the platforms, and their submissions and verbatim commitments, are not explicitly cited in the report. Instead, they have been paraphrased, leaving their essence and spirit unscathed.
36. See Appendix II for more information on the Minimum Wage figures.
37. bigbasket's public commitment can be found here: https://www.linkedin.com/posts/bigbasket-com_at-bigbasket-we-believe-in-building-enduring-activity-7005079061626597376-nyc4/. (Accessed: 15 September 2024). Urban Company's public commitment can be found here: <https://www.urbancompany.com/partner-welfare-policy/> (Accessed: 15 September 2024)
38. See Appendix II for more information on the Living Wage figures.
39. The estimate of the number of workers is from Abrar, P. (2024) Swiggy launches Project Next to offer career growth for delivery partners. *Business Standard*. September 17. Available at: https://www.business-standard.com/companies/start-ups/swiggy-launches-project-next-to-offer-career-growth-for-delivery-partners-124091700723_1.html (Accessed: 26 September 2024).
40. Dutta, A. (2022) Strike by Zomato 'Partners' wins no concessions but brings a benefit unfamiliar to India's gig workers. *Article-14*. May 27. Available at: <https://article-14.com/post/strike-by-zomato-partners-wins-no-concessions-but-brings-a-benefit-unfamiliar-to-india-s-gig-workers-62903ab0f1d5b> (Accessed: September 11, 2024).
41. Mehrotra, K. (2022) We asked dozens of Indian gig workers about their future. They see none. *Rest of World*. December 12. Available at: <https://restofworld.org/2022/indian-gig-workers-about-future/>. (Accessed: September 11, 2024).
42. Dutta (2022), *op.cit.*
43. Zomato. (n.d). Deliver Food with Zomato. Available at: <https://www.zomato.com/deliver-food/>. (Accessed: September 9, 2024).
44. Interviewed 8 March 2024.
45. Interviewed 5 June 2024.
46. Interviewed 3 June 2024.
47. Interviewed 3 February 2024.
48. Interviewed 3 April 2024.
49. Interviewed 16 April 2024.
50. Interviewed 2 February 2024.
51. Interviewed 26 February 2024.
52. Interviewed 8 February 2024.
53. Interviewed 12 April 2024.
54. Sun, P., Yujie Chen, J., and Rani, U. (2023) From flexible labour to 'sticky labour': A tracking study of workers in the food-delivery platform economy of China. *Work, Employment and Society*, 37(2), 412-431. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/09500170211021570>.
55. These points are also echoed by two other surveys of platform workers in India. See, Paigam, University of Pennsylvania. (2024) Prisoners on wheels? Report on working and living conditions of app-based workers in India. Available at: <https://tgpwu.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Report-Final-Print-1.pdf> (Accessed: 25 September 2024) and, Vasudevan, V., Alam, M.M. and Kumar, D. (2024) The RIGHTS survey – Report on a nationwide survey of platform workers in India. Janpahal. New Delhi. Available at: https://www.janpahal.com/_files/ugd/1cfd77_8f2a9a6d26494848a49cd47864b10934.pdf?trk=public_post_comment-text (Accessed: 25 September 2024).
56. For the use of the term 'flexploitation', see Foti, A. (2017) General Theory of the Precariat: Great Recession, Revolution, Reaction. Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures. Available at: <https://networkcultures.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/ToD25-Precariat-AlexFoti.pdf>. (Accessed: 15 September 2024).
57. Varini and Kumar. (2024), *op.cit.*
58. International Labour Organisation. (2024) Realizing Decent Work In The Platform Economy, Geneva: International Labour Office, 2024. © ILO. p.66. Available at: <https://www.ilo.org/resource/conference-paper/ilc/113/realizing-decent-work-platform-economy>. (Accessed: 15 September 2024).
59. International Labour Organisation. (2021) World Employment and Social Outlook: The role of digital labour platforms in transforming the world of work. Geneva: International Labour Organisation. p. 31. Available at: https://www.ilo.org/global/research/global-reports/weso/2021/WCMS_771749/lang--en/index.htm. (Accessed: 28 September 2023).
60. Ibid.
61. De Stefano, V. (2016) The rise of the 'just-in-time workforce': On-demand work, crowdwork and labour protection in the 'gig-economy'. Geneva: International Labour Organisation. p. 1. Available at: https://www.ilo.org/travail/info/publications/WCMS_443267/lang--en/index.htm. (Accessed: 28 September 2023).
62. Work-related costs include direct costs the worker may incur in performing the job. This may include, for instance, transport in between jobs, supplies, vehicle repair and maintenance, fuel, road tolls and vehicle insurance. However, it does not include transport to and from the job (unless in-between tasks) nor taxes, social security contributions or health insurance.
63. In addition to direct working hours where workers are completing tasks, workers also spend time performing unpaid activities necessary for their work, such as waiting for delivery orders at restaurants and travelling between jobs and undertaking mandatory training (i.e., training activities that must be completed for workers to continue accessing work on the platform). These indirect working hours are also considered part of active hours as workers are giving this time to the platform. Thus, 'active hours' are defined as including both direct and indirect working hours.

64. In order to evidence this, where the platform is responsible for paying workers the platform must either: (a) have a documented policy that ensures the workers receive at least the local minimum wage after costs in their active hours; or (b) provide summary statistics of transaction and cost.
65. In order to evidence this, where the platform is responsible for paying workers the platform must either: (a) have a documented policy that ensures the workers receive at least the local living wage after costs in their active hours; or (b) provide summary statistics of transaction and cost data evidencing all workers earn a minimum wage after costs.
66. The ILO recognises health and safety at work as a fundamental right. Where the platform directly engages the worker, the starting point is the ILO's Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (C155). This stipulates that employers shall be required "so far as is reasonably practicable, the workplaces, machinery, equipment and processes under their control are safe and without risk to health", and that "where necessary, adequate protective clothing and protective equipment [should be provided] to prevent, so far as is reasonably practicable, risk of accidents or of adverse effects on health."
67. The ILO recognises health and safety at work as a fundamental right. Where the platform directly engages the worker, the starting point is the ILO's Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (C155). This stipulates that employers shall be required "so far as is reasonably practicable, the workplaces, machinery, equipment and processes under their control are safe and without risk to health", and that "where necessary, adequate protective clothing and protective equipment [should be provided] to prevent, so far as is reasonably practicable, risk of accidents or of adverse effects on health."
68. The ILO's Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC 2006), Reg. 2.1, and the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (C189), Articles 7 and 15, serve as helpful guiding examples of adequate provisions in workers' terms and conditions, as well as worker access to those terms and conditions.
69. Workers should have the option of escalating grievances that have not been satisfactorily addressed and, in the case of automated decisions, should have the option of escalating it for human mediation.
70. In accordance with the ILO Convention No. 111 concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation and applicable national law.
71. A mechanism for the expression of collective worker voice will allow workers to participate in the setting of agendas so as to be able to table issues that most concern them. This mechanism can be in physical or virtual form (e.g. online meetings) and should involve meaningful interaction (e.g. not surveys). It should also allow for ALL workers to participate in regular meetings with the management.
72. For example, "[the platform] will support any effort by its workers to collectively organise or form a trade union. Collective bargaining through trade unions can often bring about more favourable working conditions."
73. See the ILO's Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (C087), which stipulates that "workers and employers, without distinction, shall have the right to establish and join organisations of their own choosing without previous authorisation" (Article 2); "the public authorities shall refrain from any interference which would restrict the right or impede the lawful exercise thereof" (Article 3) and that "workers' and employers' organisations shall not be liable to be dissolved or suspended by administrative authority" (Article 4). Similarly the ILO's Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (C098) protects the workers against acts of anti-union discrimination in respect of their employment, explaining that not joining a union or relinquishing trade union membership cannot be made a condition of employment or cause for dismissal. Out of the 185 ILO member states, currently 155 ratified C087 and 167 ratified C098.
74. If workers choose to seek representation from an independent collective body of workers or union that is not readily recognized by the platform, the platform should then be open to adopt multiple channels of representation, when the legal framework allows, or seek ways to implement workers' queries to its communication with the existing representative body.
75. *The Times of India*. (2024) Bengaluru-based Dunzo lays off 75% employees, reduces workforce to 50. September 04. Available at: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/technology/tech-news/bengaluru-based-dunzo-lays-off-75-employees-reduces-workforce-to-50/articleshow/112983283.cms> (Accessed: 15 September 2024).
76. Available at: <https://karmikaspanandana.karnataka.gov.in/storage/pdf-files/minimum%20wages/30EmploymentnotcoveredunderanyScheduledEmployments.pdf>. (Accessed: 19 September 2024).
77. Available at: <https://karmikaspanandana.karnataka.gov.in/storage/pdf-files/minimum%20wages/68ShopsandCommercialEstablishments.pdf> (Accessed: 19 September 2024).
78. Tamil Nadu Labour Welfare and Skill Development Department, Revision of minimum rates of wages in Employment in Shops and Commercial Establishments, G.O.(D). No.343 (Issued on July 07, 2022). Available at: https://cms.tn.gov.in/sites/default/files/go/labemp_e_343_2022-D.pdf. (Accessed: 19 September 2024).
79. Tamil Nadu Labour Welfare and Skill Development Department, Revision of minimum rates of wages in Employment in Domestic Work, G.O.(2D). No.99 (Issued on Nov 8, 2022). Available at: https://cms.tn.gov.in/sites/default/files/go/labemp_e_99_2022_2D.pdf (Accessed: 19 September 2024).
80. See Endnote 78.
81. Tamil Nadu Labour Welfare and Skill Development Department, Revision of minimum rates of wages for employments in Auto Rickshaws and Taxi, G.O.(2D). No.114 (Issued on Dec 13, 2022), IND. Available at: https://cms.tn.gov.in/sites/default/files/go/labemp_e_114_2022_2D.pdf. (Accessed: 19 September 2024).
82. Available at https://labour.delhi.gov.in/sites/default/files/Labour/generic_multiple_files/adobe_scan_23-oct-2023.pdf. (Accessed: 19 September 2024).
83. Minimum Wages Act, 1984; Government of Kerala, Labour, and Skills (E) Department Notification - G.O.(P) No. 196/2016/LBR. Minimum rates of wages payable to the employees employed in Shops and establishments in the State of Kerala (Schedule I) and Minimum rates of wages payable to the employees employed in Courier Establishment, D.T.P. Centers, Internet Cafés, Telephone Booths, Catering Services and Houseboats in the State of Kerala (Schedule II) – (A). Published: December 2015. Available at: https://lc.kerala.gov.in/images/mw_shop_final.pdf (Accessed: 25 September 2024), and, Minimum Wages Act, 1984. Government of Kerala, Labour and Skills (E) Department Notification - G.O.(P) No. 44/2017/LBR. Minimum rate of wages payable to the employees employed in the Light Motor Vehicles sector in the state of Kerala. Published: May 2017. Available at: <https://lc.kerala.gov.in/images/pdf/keralagazette1024LightMotorVehicles.pdf> (Accessed: 25 September 2024).
84. For more information on Living Wage, see: <https://wageindicator.org/> (Accessed:15 September 2024).



Fairwork

Find out more

 fair.work

 info@fair.work

 [@TowardsFairWork](https://www.facebook.com/TowardsFairWork)

 [@TowardsFairWork](https://twitter.com/TowardsFairWork)