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Lok Adalats: Justice in the Language of the People

BY BHUMIKA DAIMARY

Origins and Philosophy

The Lok Adalat, though formally recognized only in the late 20th century, has deep roots in India's traditional panchayat system, where disputes were resolved through dialogue and mutual understanding. The concept gained statutory status with the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, which mandated the establishment of Lok Adalats at various levels and declared their awards equivalent to civil court decrees, making them final and binding, with no further appeal. Today, Lok Adalats exist in multiple forms: National Lok Adalats, held on designated days across India; State and District Lok Adalats that function regularly; and Permanent Lok Adalats for disputes relating to public utility services. During the pandemic, e-Lok Adalats took justice online, proving that access to justice need not be confined by geography or circumstance.

Scale and Impact

What began as a modest experiment has evolved into one of the world's largest dispute resolution exercises. In 2024, the first National Lok Adalat alone disposed of 1.13 crore cases, including 96.46 lakh pre-litigation matters and 17.14 lakh pending cases. Later that year, the third National Lok Adalat settled over 1.14 crore cases across 27 States and Union Territories, with settlement amounts totalling ₹8,482.08 crore. The National Legal Services Authority (hereinafter referred to as NALSA) notes that these sessions now routinely resolve more than 1 crore cases annually, a massive jump from 1.27 crore cases disposed of across four Lok Adalats in 2021, which involved over ₹25,000 crore in settlements. At the state level, empirical research underscores the positive correlation between regular Lok Adalat organization and case resolution. A 2015 study on Rajasthan (2001–2013) found that the increased frequency of Lok Adalats have significantly boosted disposal rates, showing that institutional continuity directly improves access and efficiency.

However, performance is uneven. In Madhya Pradesh, which has the highest number of Permanent Lok Adalats (50), only 1,275 cases were settled between 2019 and 2021, illustrating how institutional presence does not always translate into functional success .

Promise and Limitations

The appeal of Lok Adalats lies in their simplicity. There are no intimidating courtrooms, no burdensome fees, and no adversarial contests. The process relies on consent and compromise, where victory is measured not in judgments won but in conflicts resolved. For many individuals from marginalized or rural communities, Lok Adalats have opened doors to justice that was long out of reach within the formal court system. They offer a quicker, more affordable and more respectful means of dispute resolution, often transforming cases that might have taken years into settlements achieved within hours. However, behind the impressive statistics lie complex realities. Not every Lok Adalat functions with the same vigour or fairness. Some are organized for a more symbolic or statistical success than genuine resolution. The emphasis on high disposal numbers sometimes eclipses the quality of settlements, with weaker parties, especially in debt, property, or matrimonial disputes, feeling pressured into making some sort of a compromise. Moreover, as the NALSA Annual Report (2023–24) notes, awareness about Lok Adalats remains limited in rural and tribal areas, where people either do not know of their existence or mistrust their informality. The system also suffers from a lack of post-settlement monitoring, as few studies track whether parties comply with awards or remain satisfied with the outcomes.

The Way Forward

For Lok Adalats to maintain their credibility, they must evolve from being one-day settlement drives into continuously functioning institutions grounded in fairness and accessibility. Strengthening their foundation requires more than logistical efficiency; it demands a sustained commitment to justice in both form and spirit.

This begins with capacity building, training conciliators, panel lawyers, and paralegal volunteers to ensure that compromise does not turn coercive. Regular institutional evaluation and independent audits can help shift the focus from numbers to quality. Expanding digital infrastructure through e-Lok Adalats can extend reach to remote districts, while awareness campaigns in local languages can make the mechanism truly inclusive. Finally, closer coordination between Lok Adalats and the judiciary is essential to ensure that suitable cases are identified and referred at an early stage to ensure effectiveness.

Conclusion

Lok Adalats remain one of India's most remarkable legal innovations, acting as a bridge between the ideals of justice and the realities of ordinary life. They embody the belief that resolution need not always come from the courtroom; sometimes, it comes from conversation. But for this vision to endure, Lok Adalats must evolve beyond being a numbers-driven enterprise. They must guarantee fairness, transparency, and inclusivity, so that when justice speaks in the language of the people, it does so not in haste, but with heart.



BRIDGING JUSTICE GAPS FOR CHILDREN

BY PANYA PRASAD

Protecting Children's Rights

Experiencing violence and exploitation during childhood can have a lifelong impact on a child's mental health and overall well-being. Due to their young age, children are especially vulnerable to abuse, neglect and failures within the systems intended to protect them.

In order to combat and curb these issues of violence and protecting children from falling prey to such exploitation and abuse, the Indian Government has implemented certain key legislations that help safeguard the rights and welfare of children. Some of these legislation are, the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 (hereinafter referred to as POCSO) and the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 (hereinafter referred to as the JJ Act).

For the purposes of an effective implementation of its provisions, both the statutes define and establish who would constitute as a child. The POCSO act under its section 2(d), prescribes that "child means any person below the age of eighteen years." Similarly the JJ Act, under its section 2(12), states that a "child means a person who has not completed eighteen years of age." The JJ Act also provides for the definition of the terms 'juvenile' under section 2(35), which is akin to the definitions mentioned in section 2(d) of POCSO and section 2(12) of the JJ Act and refers to any "child below the age of eighteen years."

Legal Safeguards for Children in India

First, talking about the POCSO Act, it recognizes and penalizes a wide range of sexual offences against minors. The Act also establishes child-friendly mechanisms for investigation and trial, ensuring sensitivity in dealing with victims. Yet, its implementation continues to face systematic hurdles. According to the latest National Crime Records Bureau (hereinafter referred to as NCRB), Report, published in 2023, a total of 67,694 cases were registered under the POCSO Act amounting for 38.2% of all crimes against children.

These figures highlight that sexual offences remain alarmingly prevalent despite the Act's strong legal framework. The Act's effectiveness is hampered by several key challenges like delayed trials, low conviction rates, lack of awareness among stakeholders, inadequate infrastructure and child-friendly courts, insufficient training of police and judiciary, and limited coordination among enforcement agencies and NGOs.

However, this can be tackled by faster legal proceedings, increased funding, dedicated training programs for law enforcement agencies, running awareness campaigns and especially educating parents, teachers and the general public, which would help create a protective barrier around children and reduce the incidence of sexual assaults. Beyond sexual offences, child trafficking also remains a grave and widespread violation of child rights. Thousands of children are exploited each year through forced labour, sexual abuse and organized begging. While India has laws such as the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 and relevant provisions under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, along with Article 23 of the Constitution of India which aim to prevent the evils of human trafficking, its enforcement remains largely insufficient. Poverty, lack of education and systematic corruption further fuel this cycle. Effective action demands coordination between law enforcement, social agencies and pro bono legal advocates who can represent rescued children, ensure rehabilitation and hold offenders accountable.

Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015

Moving onto the JJ Act, which was designed to ensure care, protection and rehabilitation of juveniles in conflict with the law, while upholding the principles of restorative justice. Juvenile justice is based on the concept that since minors vary from adults, criminal justice should be approached differently. The Act recognizes the fact that minors are still undergoing emotional, intellectual and social development stages and thus may be unaware of the full effects of what they are doing. The JJ Act also tries to address the debate between the ideas of rehabilitation v. punishment and represents an earnest effort to find a middle ground between the two. Therefore, the Statute aims to rehabilitate and reintegrate young offenders through a holistic approach that balances compassion, accountability, and social safety, while also acknowledging the need for a proportionate response to serious offences in the interest of justice.

However, its implementation also faces various challenges such as, inadequate infrastructure and overcrowded observation homes, shortage of trained counsellors and social workers, delayed judicial processes due to overburdened Juvenile Justice Boards, unreliable age determination methods and weak inter-departmental coordination between enforcement, welfare and judicial agencies. As per the 2023 NCRB Report, 31,365 cases were registered against juveniles which is a 2.7% increase over the previous years with 79% of apprehended juveniles falling between the age bracket of 16-18 years.

Conclusion

The Pro Bono legal work can play a vital role in strengthening India's child justice system. By offering free legal aid, representation and advocacy, pro bono lawyers and law students help bridge gaps in access to justice, ensure fair treatment and support rehabilitation efforts. Their work can transform legal aid into active compassion, ensuring that every child's right to safety, dignity and a hopeful future is upheld.



CHILDREN IN CONFLICT WITH LAW UNDER THE POCSO ACT: BALANCING PROTECTION, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND PRO BONO ADVOCACY BY ANINDITA SAHA

The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012

The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012, was enacted to provide overarching judicial protection for children against sexual exploitation and abuse. It prescribes the particulars of offences, imposes stringent penalties, and assures procedures sensitive to the needs of children. However, a thorny issue arises when the perpetrator, under the meaning of the POCSO Act, is likewise a child — that is, a person below the age of 18 years. Section 34 of the Act categorically prescribes that such cases should be dealt with under the provisions of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 (JJ Act), thereby emphasizing rehabilitation instead of penalization in accordance with the principles of the Indian juvenile justice framework.

Juvenile Justice Board and Procedural Safeguards

According to Section 4 of the JJ Act, every district must constitute a Juvenile Justice Board (JJB) which, under Section 8, is empowered to inquire into and pass appropriate orders for child-in-conflict-with-law offences. Upon the arrest of a child for an offence under the POCSO Act, Section 10 mandates that the child be handed over to a Special Juvenile Police Unit or Child Welfare Officer and produced before the JJB within 24 hours at the latest. This process ensures timely judicial intervention and protection against custodial violations, which are a common concern in the criminal justice system.

Section 12 of the JJ Act entitles a child to bail unless the release is deemed undesirable either for the child's own welfare or for the protection of society. A major provision, Section 15, imposes on the JJB a duty to conduct a preliminary assessment in cases involving serious crimes committed by children aged between 16 and 18 years.

If the JJB determines that the child should be tried as an adult, it transfers the case to the Children's Court under Section 18(3); otherwise, the case remains with the JJB. When retained by the JJB, it is dealt with through rehabilitative orders under Section 18(1), including counselling, community service, probation, or confinement in a special home. This model promotes reintegration and recognizes that children's offences are often the product of abuse, neglect, or adverse environments rather than inherent criminality.

Trial and Sentencing under a Reformatory Framework

If the case is transferred to the Children's Court, Section 19 mandates that the proceedings must still maintain a child-friendly atmosphere and include a detailed rehabilitation plan. Even in such cases, detention continues only until the child reaches 21 years of age, after which a review determines the need for any additional custody. Section 21 explicitly prohibits life imprisonment without remission or the death penalty for children, reinforcing the reformatory and rehabilitative conception of juvenile justice.

Under the jurisprudential framework established by the POCSO Act, the convergence of minors with justice mechanisms presents a complex dilemma that necessitates balancing justice, accountability, and protection. While the Juvenile Justice Act's rehabilitative focus and philosophy are harmonized with the POCSO Act's protective intent through a comprehensive statutory structure, practical limitations remain. These challenges highlight the pressing need for active volunteer advocacy and specialized legal support.

Role of Pro Bono Legal Services in Juvenile Justice

Pro bono legal services are essential for ensuring genuine access to justice and should not merely be viewed as acts of selflessness. In cases involving children accused of child-on-child sexual assault, specialized advocacy becomes crucial. The NALSA Child-Friendly Legal Services Scheme, 2024, emphasizes child-sensitive legal representation grounded in an understanding of trauma and child development. Such advocacy relies on insights drawn from developmental psychology, restorative justice, and behavioral sciences, ensuring that children are not further harmed by the justice process meant to protect them.

As India moves towards a more robust and empathetic juvenile justice system, the willingness of lawyers to provide specialized and voluntary defense to vulnerable children will be vital. It is only through such dedicated advocacy that rehabilitation can become a genuine and attainable goal, striking the delicate balance between reformation and retribution. Pro bono legal efforts thus serve as the bridge between legislative ideals and practical justice, ensuring that every child's right to protection, dignity, and a second chance is upheld within the legal framework.

Conclusion

In conclusion, while both the POCSO Act, 2012, and the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015, establish a comprehensive legal framework to protect children from sexual offences and ensure rehabilitation of child offenders, the intersection of these two laws presents complex legal and ethical challenges. Balancing the need for justice for victims with the principles of reformatory justice for child offenders requires a sensitive and well-coordinated approach. .



SECURING SOCIAL SECURITY ACCESS FOR INDIA'S GIG WORKERS

BY ANISHA BANKA

India's gig economy – from Ola/Uber drivers to delivery couriers – is booming, and the 2020 Code on Social Security formally defines “gig” and “platform” workers for the first time. The government's e-Shram portal has enrolled nearly 31 crore informal workers (about 3.37 lakh are gig/platform workers). Yet, many workers still fall through the cracks. In the pending IFAT v. Union case, unions note that gig workers are treated as mere “partners” (not employees), denying them basic rights. The Supreme Court has pressed the government to set a timeline for implementing the Social Security Code, quipping that “only astrologers” know when its schemes will kick in.

State Laws on Gig Workers: Karnataka Leads the Way

To bridge this gap, states are stepping in. Karnataka passed the Platform-Based Gig Workers (Social Security and Welfare) Act, 2025, effective May 30, 2025. This act creates a statutory Welfare Board (chaired by the state Labour Minister) to register all gig workers and aggregators. Registered workers get a Unique ID and can access social security schemes (funded by a small “welfare fee” on platforms) once they meet contribution/work thresholds. The Act guarantees fair, transparent contracts, income security, and even rights to safe working conditions. For example, registered drivers can use a two-tier grievance system – first with the platform, then the state board.

Meanwhile, aggregators must register themselves and all their workers with the Board (within 45 days), share data on transactions, and deposit a nominal welfare levy into a state fund. (Karnataka debated a 1–5% fee on payouts to fund these schemes.) The goal is to balance the “flexibility” of gig work with basic protections. Labour Minister Santosh Lad noted that some drivers were clocking 16-hour days for only ₹1,600–1,800, risking long-term harm – underscoring why such safeguards are urgently needed. Karnataka is following Rajasthan (2023) and joining Telangana and Bihar, all now moving similar laws

Barriers on the Ground

Despite these laws and e-Shram, many gig workers still can't claim benefits. One big hurdle is awareness and enforcement. The government has urged workers to register on e-Shram (which would link them to schemes like Ayushman Bharat health cover) But union leaders point out platforms already hold drivers' Aadhaar and bank details, yet are not uploading them – leaving registration up to scattered workers. In fact, an RTI revealed platforms have no deadline to add their workers on e-Shram. As IFAT warns, without mandatory data-sharing, “workers who don't sign up won't get the benefits,” and there's no guarantee when or if they will.

Digital literacy and process issues compound the problem. Media reports found that even among drivers who have registered, very few know what's next. One Delhi driver said he nearly ignored an “important” e-Shram notification on his phone, thinking it was junk – illustrating how easily updates are missed. Earlier versions of the portal were also criticized for a “complex registration process” that didn't fit gig work's flexible, multi-job nature. In short, long hours and opaque app notifications mean many earners simply remain disconnected from the very schemes meant to help them.

Conclusion

Indian law now formally recognizes gig and platform workers, and initiatives like e-Shram and Karnataka's Welfare Board are concrete steps. But real impact will depend on implementation. As one organizer put it, platforms could drive this enrollment (they already have the data– yet without clear mandates, many workers will “miss out” on the social security promised to them. Ensuring that gig workers actually receive healthcare cover, pensions and insurance will require both robust state schemes and grassroots outreach. Until then, gig workers remain in a limbo: acknowledged in law, but still fighting to be counted in practice



CLIMATE JUSTICE FOR CITIZENS

BY VINUTHNA

Climate Justice: An Emerging Paradigm

Over the past several years, climate justice has become one of the most influential concepts shaping how societies respond to the global climate crisis. It is based on the principle of fairness and equality, where communities that contribute least to greenhouse gas emissions often face the worst impacts of climate change.

This view extends beyond traditional environmental discourse, which seeks to reduce emissions and preserve ecosystems. Climate justice is a people-oriented approach that aims to ensure equitable regulations, organizations, and policies addressing both the causes and consequences of global warming. The growing severity of these changes has already become evident, as highlighted in a recent report by Climate Central (2025).

Global Impacts of Climate Change

During the period between June and August 2025, about 1.8 billion individuals—roughly one-fifth of the global population—experienced daily average temperatures that were at least three times more probable due to anthropogenic climate change. South Asia, Africa, and South America were reported as the regions most severely affected by sustained heat.

In India and Bangladesh, a heatwave lasting several weeks disrupted agricultural production, depleted water resources, and posed serious public health risks. A notable example is offered by the Supreme Court of India, which interpreted the right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution to include the right to live in a clean and healthy environment. Similar jurisprudential developments have been witnessed in Colombia, Germany, and South Africa. Citizens, youth, and Indigenous peoples are increasingly turning to legal systems to hold governments and corporations accountable, as reflected in the growing number of climate-related cases filed across 65 countries worldwide. The consistent increase in climate litigation signals the transformation of environmental protection from a matter of policy discretion into one of legal rights and obligations

To ensure true equity, indigenous communities, women, youth, and marginalized groups need to participate in policymaking. Indigenous knowledge systems that have been effective in maintaining ecological balance through traditional methods of forest and water management can offer valuable guidance for modern governance.

International Law and Shared Responsibility

This system of responsibility is further reinforced by international law and multilateral accords. The Paris Agreement emphasizes that the responsibility of fighting climate change should be shared by every nation but also stresses the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, with developed countries leading and supporting developing nations with financial and technological assistance.

Nonetheless, analysis by Climate Central shows that nations contributing the least to global emissions often experience the most severe consequences. Africa, South Asia, and Latin America repeatedly face climate-related disasters despite their minimal contribution to global warming.

Climate Financing and Policy Measures

This imbalance highlights the need for fair climate financing options, including the Loss and Damage Fund, to support countries affected by climate-induced devastation. Unfortunately, many such promises remain underfunded or unfulfilled, leaving vulnerable communities to cope with limited resources and insufficient institutional support.

To ensure effective climate justice, equity must be integrated into governance. Policies and laws should be accurate and flexible, capable of addressing current environmental threats while anticipating future challenges. They need to protect climate migrants and foster gender-sensitive and youth-oriented frameworks with institutional responsiveness to the communities they serve.

Judicial institutions have also interpreted environmental protection as part of the public interest, acknowledging that sustainability cannot be separated from fundamental rights.

Conclusion

Finally, climate justice is not limited to emission limits or policy formulation. It embodies a broader vision rooted in dignity, equality, and the right to survival. The report produced by Climate Central (2025) is an empirical wake-up call demonstrating that climate change is already the lived reality of billions, especially in regions that contributed least to its causes.

In conclusion, climate justice emphasizes equity, accountability, and the protection of vulnerable communities in the face of environmental crises. It requires inclusive governance, legal recognition, fair financing, and integration of Indigenous and local knowledge. Only by embedding these principles into policy, law, and societal action can climate change responses be truly just, ensuring that all citizens—especially the most marginalized—enjoy the right to a healthy and secure environment.



GENDER JUSTICE AND WORKPLACE SAFETY IN CONTEMPORARY INDIA

BY AIMAN

Inclusive Climate Governance and Indigenous Participation

Traditionally, climate governance was characterized by a top-down policymaking process via state and business institutions. In a bid to ensure true equity, indigenous communities, women, youth, and the marginalized groups need to be part of the policymaking process. The indigenous knowledge systems that have been effective in maintaining ecological balance through the conventional methods of forest and water management can offer great knowledge in modern governance. These systems ought to be respected, land rights guaranteed, and participatory mechanisms institutionalized in order to develop sustainable and equitable responses to climate change.

Global Responsibility and Climate Justice

This system of responsibility has been further reinforced by international law and multilateral accords. The Paris Agreement recognizes that the responsibility of fighting against climate change should be shared by every nation, but it also stresses the idea of common but differentiated responsibilities—where developed countries should lead and support developing countries with financial and technological help. Nonetheless, analysis by Climate Central shows that the nations that contribute the least to global emissions often experience the most adverse consequences of climate change. Africa, South Asia, and Latin America repeatedly face climate-related disasters despite their minimal contribution to global warming.

The Broader Vision of Climate Justice

Finally, the issue of climate justice is not limited to setting emission limits or policy formulation. It embodies a broader vision rooted in dignity, equality, and the right to survival. The [report produced by Climate Central \(2025\)](#) is an empirical wake-up call to the fact that climate change is already becoming the lived reality of billions of people, specifically in those areas that have contributed least to its cause.

In India, gender-based violence remains intersectional and endemic as it intersects social and economic boundaries. [The 2022 NCRB report](#) showed that more than 445,000 women were reported to be victims of crimes such as domestic violence, dowry harassment, sexual assault, abduction, and murder.

Legal Framework for Workplace Safety

The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 or POSH Act continues to form the basis of workplace safety, further reinforced by the 2025 amendment. The Act obligates any organization with 10 or more workers to form Internal Complaints Committees (ICCs), conduct regular sensitization exercises, and complete inquiries within 90 days. New regulatory systems now require disclosure of ICC composition, training plans, and inquiry results. Failure to comply has been warned by the Supreme Court with strict financial penalties or even cancellation of business licenses.

At the same time, while small businesses and start-ups enjoy certain exemptions under [Section 446B of the Companies Act, 2013](#), the core requirements—such as ICC establishment and reporting—remain mandatory.

Access to Justice and Legal Aid for Gender Equity

In India, a variety of remedies address workplace harassment, whether sexual, discriminatory, or retaliatory. These include reporting to the ICC, filing FIRs in cases of criminal misconduct, relocation of either party as a protective measure, granting protective leave, and seeking civil compensation for proven trauma or career loss.

Gender equity is also rooted in access to justice, enshrined in Article 39A of the Constitution and the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, which ensures free legal aid for eligible individuals. Such services are provided by NALSA, State Legal Services Authorities, NGOs, and bar associations through initiatives like Tele-Law, which connects victims to free legal representation via digital channels. For small enterprises needing POSH compliance support, legal aid organizations and grassroots networks offer pro bono consultations, model policies, ICC templates, and online awareness programs.

Conclusion

In conclusion, both climate justice and gender justice embody a shared vision of equity, accountability, and sustainability. Each reflects the urgent need to protect vulnerable communities whether from environmental degradation or systemic violence and to ensure dignity and fairness in governance. A rights-based approach rooted in participation, inclusivity, and compassion must guide both climate and gender frameworks.



THE HAZARDOUS REALITY OF GIG WORKERS

BY ANWESHA SAMANTARAY

The gig economy has revolutionized livelihoods by promising freedom, flexibility, and digital empowerment through platforms such as Uber, Swiggy, Zomato, and Amazon Flex. Behind this glamour, however, is a brutal reality: most gig workers do not enjoy labor rights, job security, and social protection. They are termed "independent contractors," deprived of minimum wages, health protection, and occupational safety, allowing platforms to extract maximum profits while unloading risks onto workers. Gig workers, those employed in temporary, on-demand, or task-based work on digital platforms, are frequently at risk of having the lines between employee and independent contractor blurred. As Dr. Julien Chaisse notes in The Gig Workers Facing the Regulator, this makes it easy for platforms to opt out of their responsibilities. The Human Rights Watch report The Gig Trap (2025) points out algorithmic control where technology determines ratings, waiting times, and pay, producing a regime of digital monitoring. Many U.S. gig workers earn less than \$5–6 per hour after deductions, facing deactivation for poor ratings and lacking grievance redressal.

In India, more than 7.7 million individuals are engaged in food delivery, ride-sharing, and logistics (IDR Online). Though the Code on Social Security, 2020, has identified gig and platform workers, enforcement is weak. Section 112 gives the power of welfare program formulation, but a lack of funding restricts its impact. Research by the Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Contemporary Studies discovered that gig workers exist without savings or insurance, frequently getting injured without compensation. Judicial reactions are arriving: in Uber Technologies Inc. v. Heller (Canada), the Supreme Court invalidated unequal arbitration clauses, while Uber BV v. Aslam (UK, 2021) gave riders rights to a minimum wage and paid time off. The International Labor Organization (ILO, 2022) and UN SDG 8 promote equal pay, secure working conditions, and social dialogue for all employees. Finally, the crisis of the gig worker is a larger one of responsibility and justice in the digital age. Without strong laws and enforcement, flexibility can hide exploitation.

Legal and Pro Bono Measures to Save Gig Workers.

- **Re-defining Employment Relationships.**

The initial move towards justice is to reclassify the status of Gig workers. The premise is reconsidered to conclude whether or not courts and legislatures worldwide consider gig workers to be independent. The Uber BV v. Aslam in the UK was an exception, in which Uber drivers are considered workers due to the extent of control that the platform has on the working hours and prices. Through this appreciation, they could be allowed to have certain fundamental rights such as minimum wages and holiday entitlement.

A more practical solution is suggested by other researchers like S. Subashini (IJLRA, 2023), i.e., a hybrid idea that implies flexibility and required labor protection. The Code on Social Security, 2020, has taken a step in the right direction as it recognizes the lives of the gig workers, but fails to provide full labor rights. Many pro bono lawyers are now urging it to be construed in order to incorporate more wage theft, sudden deactivation, and unhealthy working environments protections.

- **Pro Bono Legal Advocacy and Pro Bono Legal Support**

Pro-Bono has replaced one of the pillars of the work of ensuring that gig workers get their rights. Lawyers LegalShield offers low-cost or free consultancy to ride-share and delivery drivers in the U.S., assisting them to contest unjust terminations or make accident claims. Legal aid groups such as BTG Advaya and ILO-funded legal clinics in India use an example of a young lawyer and student to represent gig workers in wage negotiations and hearings of their policies. Alliances with the labor unions, such as the Indian Federation of App-Based Transport Workers (IFAT), have facilitated the class actions and platform negotiation. These partnerships have highlighted the issue of algorithmic discrimination, unreasonable penalties, and the necessity to provide safer working conditions.

- **Governmental and Policy Interventions**

The governments are starting to notice. The state (Telangana government) wishes to have a Gig and Platform Workers Welfare Board, which will offer insurance cover, health benefits, and a grievance redressal system with the state and platform companies contributing equally. At the national level, the Budget 2025 in India has suggested the welfare scheme to have a Universal Account Number (UAN) to enable worker portability across platforms- an invention that can significantly enhance worker security.

The European Union is proposing globally the Platform Work Directive (2024), which assumes the existence of an employment relationship in the case of ambiguity, and workers would not be deprived of basic protections due to the contractual loopholes. These are developments that are consistent with the ILO principles of equality and responsibility in the various categories of employment.

- **Corporate Responsibility and Ethical Technology.**

The critical role is played by corporations as such. Platforms should also invest in an accountable algorithm. Julien Chaisse suggests that platforms ought to reveal their compensation patterns, how work is distributed, and ranked. Ethical design does not mean that technology can be used as an instrument of empowerment. One of them is the platforms that could introduce a transparent overview of the income, automatic insurance coverage, and artificial intelligence-based driving safety notifications.

- **The collective bargaining and worker representation.**

The collective bargaining continues to be strong even in decentralized work on the digital front. The Gig Workers Rising union in the United States and the Indian Delivery Workers Union are organizing their workers through social networks and local associations. These organizations have been in a position to lobby the pay transparency, rest breaks, and social security coverage through the pro bono law services. Their greater power is an indicator of a new generation of employee solidarity that is suitable in the digital era.

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