INVISIBLE WORKFORCE, VISIBLE GAPS: SOCIAL SECURITY FOR INDIA'S UNORGANISED SECTOR

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ABSTRACT

India's economic growth rests on a workforce that remains largely outside the formal architecture of labour protection. Nearly nine in every ten Indian workers are in informal employment, as agricultural labourers, construction workers, street vendors, domestic and home-based workers, migrants and, increasingly, gig and platform workers. For this "invisible workforce", the ordinary risks of sickness, injury, maternity, old age and loss of income fall almost entirely on the individual and the household. This paper examines whether the Indian legal framework, culminating in the Code on Social Security, 2020, which came into force on 21 November 2025, and the Social Security (Central) Rules, 2026, has bridged this protection gap. It traces the constitutional foundations of social security in the Directive Principles and Article 21, the relevant international standards, and the legislative journey from the Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act, 2008 to the Code. The paper argues that the Code marks genuine progress: it recognises gig and platform workers in statute for the first time, anchors a national database through the e-Shram portal, and envisages a dedicated Social Security Fund. Yet visible gaps persist. Entitlements for unorganised workers remain scheme-dependent rather than rights-based; registration of more than thirty-one crore workers on e-Shram has not automatically translated into benefits; financing is uncertain; eligibility thresholds may exclude platform workers with intermittent work; parallel central and State frameworks risk fragmentation and poor portability for migrants; and women workers face compounded exclusion. Drawing on judicial interventions, including *In re Problems and Miseries of Migrant Labourers*, the paper proposes a statutory floor of basic social protection, time-bound notification of schemes, assured tripartite financing, portable benefits and stronger grievance redress. It concludes that visibility on a database must become visibility in law and in benefits.

Keywords: Social Security; Unorganised Sector; Code on Social Security, 2020; Gig and Platform Workers; e-Shram; Informal Employment.

I. INTRODUCTION

Every economy rests on a foundation that is easy to overlook. In India, that foundation is the vast body of workers who build its cities, harvest its crops, cook and clean in its homes, stitch garments in small workshops and, more recently, deliver goods within minutes of an order placed on a smartphone. In 2007, the National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector estimated that more than nine-tenths of the Indian workforce was engaged in informal employment.[1] Nearly two decades later, the picture has changed far less than the pace of economic growth might suggest; the *India Employment Report 2024* continues to place informal employment at roughly ninety per cent of total employment.[2] These workers are not invisible in any literal sense. They are present on every street. What remains invisible is their claim to protection against life's most predictable risks.

Social security, in its classic formulation, is the response of a society to contingencies that interrupt or reduce earnings: sickness, maternity, employment injury, unemployment, invalidity, old age and the death of a breadwinner.[3] For the organised workforce, Indian law has long provided such cover through provident fund, employees' state insurance, gratuity, maternity benefit and employees' compensation legislation. For the unorganised worker, these statutes were largely inapplicable, either because thresholds based on establishment size excluded them or because there was no identifiable employer to whom liability could attach. The result has been a dual system: a small, protected core and a large, unprotected periphery.

The Code on Social Security, 2020 (the "Code") was enacted with the stated goal of extending social security to all employees and workers, whether in the organised, unorganised or any other sector.[4] The bulk of the Code was brought into force on 21 November 2025,[5] and the Social Security (Central) Rules, 2026 were notified on 8 May 2026.[6] This paper asks whether this new framework renders the invisible workforce visible not merely in statistics but in enforceable entitlements. Part II explains who the unorganised worker is. Part III sets out

[1] National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector, Report on Conditions of Work and Promotion of Livelihoods in the Unorganised Sector (Government of India, 2007).
[2] International Labour Organization & Institute for Human Development, India Employment Report 2024: Youth Employment, Education and Skills (2024).
[3] Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102), June 28, 1952, 210 U.N.T.S. 131.
[4] The Code on Social Security, 2020, No. 36, Acts of Parliament, 2020 (India), pmbl.
[5] Ministry of Labour and Employment, Notification S.O. 5319(E) (Nov. 21, 2025), Gazette of India, Extraordinary, pt. II, sec. 3(ii).
[6] Ministry of Labour and Employment, The Social Security (Central) Rules, 2026 (notified May 8, 2026) (India).

the constitutional and international foundations of the right to social security. Part IV traces the legislative journey to the Code. Part V identifies the gaps that remain. Part VI examines the judicial response, Part VII offers recommendations, and Part VIII concludes.

II. UNDERSTANDING THE UNORGANISED SECTOR AND ITS WORKERS

The Code defines the unorganised sector as an enterprise owned by individuals or self-employed workers and engaged in the production or sale of goods or the provision of services, where the number of workers employed is less than ten.[7] An unorganised worker is a home-based worker, a self-employed worker or a wage worker in the unorganised sector, and the term also includes a worker in the organised sector who is not covered by Chapters III to VII of the Code.[8] The second limb of this definition is important. It acknowledges that informality is a feature of the employment relationship and not only of the enterprise. A contract worker in a large factory who falls outside provident fund or insurance coverage is, for the purposes of the Code, as much an unorganised worker as a street vendor. This mirrors the distinction drawn in international labour statistics between the informal sector, which concerns enterprises, and informal employment, which concerns jobs that lack legal and social protection wherever they are located.[9]

The unorganised workforce is not homogeneous. It includes own-account workers and unpaid family helpers, casual wage labourers in agriculture and construction, home-based workers producing for supply chains, domestic workers, inter-State migrants and, now, gig and platform workers. The Code defines a gig worker as a person who performs work or participates in a work arrangement and earns from such activities outside a traditional employer-employee relationship,[10] and a platform worker as one who engages in platform work, that is, work in which organisations or individuals use an online platform to access other organisations or individuals to provide specific services in exchange for payment.[11] Official survey data confirm the scale of informality. According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey for 2017–18, 68.4 per cent of workers in the non-agricultural sector were engaged in the informal sector,[12] while

[7] The Code on Social Security, 2020, § 2(85).
[8] *Id.* § 2(86).
[9] International Labour Organization, Guidelines Concerning a Statistical Definition of Informal Employment, Seventeenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians (2003).
[10] The Code on Social Security, 2020, § 2(35).
[11] *Id.* §§ 2(60)–(61).
[12] Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Annual Report, Periodic Labour Force Survey (July 2017–June 2018) (2019).

agriculture, which is almost entirely informal, still employed about 43 per cent of the workforce in 2025.[13]

What unites these diverse workers is a common vulnerability. Their incomes are irregular and often seasonal; there is frequently no single identifiable employer; they move between occupations and across States; they possess little collective bargaining power; and they often lack the documents required to prove eligibility for welfare schemes. A single illness, an accident at a construction site or the onset of old age can push an entire household into poverty. It is precisely this population for whom social security is most necessary and to whom it has historically been least available.

III. CONSTITUTIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATIONS

The Constitution of India places "social security and social insurance; employment and unemployment" and the "welfare of labour" in the Concurrent List, enabling both Parliament and State Legislatures to legislate on the subject.[14] The substantive commitment is found in the Directive Principles of State Policy. Article 38 directs the State to secure a social order informed by social, economic and political justice. Article 39(e) requires that the health and strength of workers not be abused. Article 41 directs the State, within the limits of its economic capacity, to make effective provision for public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement. Article 42 calls for just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief, and Article 43 envisages a living wage and a decent standard of life for all workers.[15] Although Article 37 makes these principles non-justiciable, they are declared fundamental in the governance of the country.

The Supreme Court has repeatedly drawn upon these principles to give content to the right to life under Article 21. In *Olga Tellis*, the Court recognised that the right to life includes the right to livelihood.[16] In *Bandhua Mukti Morcha*, it held that the right to live with human dignity derives its life-breath from the Directive Principles, including the protection of the health and strength of workers.[17] Most directly, in *Consumer Education and Research Centre*, the Court held that the right to health and medical care of workers is a fundamental right under

[13] SBI Research, Informal Employment through the Lens of PLFS 2025 (May 8, 2026).
[14] India Const. sch. VII, list III, entries 23–24.
[15] India Const. arts. 38, 39(e), 41–43.
[16] Olga Tellis v. Bombay Municipal Corporation, (1985) 3 SCC 545 (India).
[17] Bandhua Mukti Morcha v. Union of India, (1984) 3 SCC 161 (India).

Article 21 read with Articles 39(e), 41 and 43, and described social security as a fundamental human right of the worker.[18] Earlier, in the *Asiad Workers* case, the Court had held that labour provided for less than the minimum wage amounted to forced labour prohibited by Article 23, thereby extending constitutional protection to construction workers engaged through contractors.[19]

At the international level, Article 22 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognises that everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security,[20] and Article 9 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, to which India acceded in 1979, obliges States Parties to recognise the right of everyone to social security, including social insurance.[21] The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has clarified that this right must extend to workers in the informal economy.[22] India has not ratified ILO Convention No. 102, but the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202) and the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204) supply a widely accepted benchmark: every person should enjoy at least a basic floor of income security and essential health care throughout the life cycle.[23]

IV. THE LEGISLATIVE JOURNEY

Before 2008, protection for unorganised workers was sectoral and fragmented. Welfare funds were created for specific occupations, such as beedi workers and cine-workers, and the Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996, together with the accompanying Cess Act, created State welfare boards funded by a levy on construction costs.[24] Several States, notably Kerala, developed their own welfare boards. Large sections of the workforce, however, belonged to no recognised occupational category and therefore to no scheme.

[18] Consumer Education & Research Centre v. Union of India, (1995) 3 SCC 42 (India).
[19] People's Union for Democratic Rights v. Union of India, (1982) 3 SCC 235 (India).
[20] Universal Declaration of Human Rights, G.A. Res. 217 (III) A, art. 22 (Dec. 10, 1948).
[21] International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights art. 9, Dec. 16, 1966, 993 U.N.T.S. 3.
[22] Comm. on Econ., Soc. & Cultural Rts., General Comment No. 19: The Right to Social Security (Art. 9), U.N. Doc. E/C.12/GC/19 (Feb. 4, 2008).
[23] Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202); Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204).
[24] The Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996, No. 27, Acts of Parliament, 1996 (India); The Building and Other Construction Workers' Welfare Cess Act, 1996, No. 28, Acts of Parliament, 1996 (India).

The Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act, 2008 was the first attempt at a general framework.[25] It required the Central Government to formulate schemes on life and disability cover, health and maternity benefits and old age protection, provided for National and State Social Security Boards, and mandated registration and identity cards for unorganised workers. Its limitation was structural. The Act created no enforceable entitlement; it largely listed existing welfare schemes in a schedule and left the content, scale and funding of protection to executive discretion. It has accordingly been described as an enabling rather than a rights-conferring statute.

The Code on Social Security, 2020 consolidated nine central laws, including the Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952, the Employees' State Insurance Act, 1948, the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961, the Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972 and the 2008 Act itself.[26] Chapter IX, comprising sections 109 to 114, deals specifically with unorganised, gig and platform workers. Section 109 requires the Central Government to frame and notify suitable welfare schemes for unorganised workers on matters relating to life and disability cover, health and maternity benefits, old age protection and education, and permits State Governments to frame schemes on provident fund, employment injury benefit, housing and skill upgradation, among others.[27] Section 113 provides for registration of unorganised, gig and platform workers on the basis of self-declaration and Aadhaar.[28] Section 114 enables schemes for gig and platform workers and provides that aggregators may be required to contribute between one and two per cent of their annual turnover, subject to a ceiling of five per cent of the amount paid or payable to such workers.[29] Section 141 envisages a Social Security Fund for the welfare of unorganised, gig and platform workers.[30]

The Social Security (Central) Rules, 2026 operationalise this framework. They supersede twelve older sets of rules, including the Unorganised Workers' Social Security Rules, 2009; require aggregators to register gig and platform workers on a central portal and to report their onboarding and exit; and constitute the National Social Security Board for gig and

[25] The Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act, 2008, No. 33, Acts of Parliament, 2008 (India).
[26] The Code on Social Security, 2020, § 164.
[27] *Id.* § 109.
[28] *Id.* § 113.
[29] *Id.* § 114(4).
[30] *Id.* § 141.

platform workers under section 114(6).[31] The Rules also attach an eligibility condition: a gig or platform worker qualifies for benefits only after working for at least ninety days with a single aggregator, or one hundred and twenty days across aggregators, in the preceding financial year.[32]

Alongside the legislation, the e-Shram portal, launched on 26 August 2021 as the National Database of Unorganised Workers, has emerged as the principal administrative instrument. By August 2026 it had recorded 31.89 crore registrations, with women accounting for 54.28 per cent of registrants, and fifteen central schemes had been integrated or mapped onto it.[33] States have also legislated for platform workers. Rajasthan enacted the first such law in 2023, and Karnataka, Jharkhand and Bihar have since followed with statutes establishing welfare boards and funds financed by a fee on aggregators, while Telangana has moved legislation on similar lines.[34]

V. THE VISIBLE GAPS

A. Entitlement Deferred: The Problem of Scheme-Dependence

The most significant gap lies in the architecture of Chapter IX itself. For workers covered by the provident fund, insurance, gratuity and maternity chapters, the Code specifies who contributes, how much, and what benefits follow. For unorganised workers, the Code largely states that the Government shall formulate schemes. The type of benefit, its quantum, eligibility conditions and the timing of notification are all left to subordinate legislation and executive policy. In effect, the Code carries forward the enabling design of the 2008 Act. A worker cannot point to a provision of the Code and claim a defined minimum pension, maternity payment or disability benefit as of right. Commentators have observed that, as of mid-2026, cover for gig and platform workers would follow only upon the notification of

[31] 6; *see also* Social Security (Central) Rules, 2026: Gig Workers Need 90 Days of Work for Benefits, MediaNama (May 2026), https://www.medianama.com/2026/05/223-social-security-central-rules-2026-gig-workers-90-days-work/.
[32] *Id.*
[33] Press Information Bureau, Ministry of Labour and Employment, 5 Years of e-Shram Portal (Aug. 25, 2026); Press Release, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Social Security for Unorganised Workers through e-Shram Portal (July 20, 2026).
[34] Rajasthan Platform Based Gig Workers (Registration and Welfare) Act, 2023 (India); Karnataka Platform-Based Gig Workers (Social Security and Welfare) Act, 2025 (India); *see* PRS Legislative Research, The Draft Telangana Gig and Platform Workers (Registration, Social Security, and Welfare) Bill, 2025 (May 16, 2025).

schemes under section 114.[35] Until a scheme is notified and funded, statutory recognition remains a promise rather than a protection.

B. Definitional Boundaries and Classification

The definitions in the Code, while broader than before, create boundaries that may themselves exclude. The definition of the unorganised worker is residual: it captures those who fall outside the other chapters. The definition of the gig worker is framed negatively, as one who earns outside a traditional employer-employee relationship. By building this premise into the definition, the Code may make it harder for platform workers to argue that the degree of control exercised over them amounts to employment, a question that courts in other jurisdictions have answered in favour of workers on the facts before them.[36] Overlapping categories also create uncertainty. A food delivery rider may simultaneously be a gig worker, a platform worker, an unorganised worker and an inter-State migrant, and it is not always clear which board, scheme and fund is responsible for him.

C. Registration without Realisation

The e-Shram portal is a genuine achievement of scale. Yet registration is a means and not an end. Registration is based on self-declaration, and the portal is primarily a database rather than a benefit-delivery mechanism in itself. The Supreme Court's continuing supervision in the migrant labourers matter illustrates the distance between the two. In March 2024, years after the portal's launch, the Court directed States and Union Territories to issue ration cards within a stipulated time to workers registered on e-Shram who did not yet possess them.[37] The order itself shows that being counted does not mean being covered. Digital registration also presupposes access to a phone, connectivity, literacy and correctly seeded identity documents, which are often least available to the most vulnerable workers.

D. Uncertain Financing

Social security for workers without employers cannot be financed on the contributory model alone. Central schemes for unorganised workers are funded from annual budgetary

[35] Welfare Governance for Gig Workers under the Social Security (Central) Rules, 2026, IMPRI Impact and Policy Research Institute (2026), https://www.impriindia.com/?p=75715.
[36] Uber BV v. Aslam [2021] UKSC 5 (appeal taken from Eng.).
[37] In re Problems & Miseries of Migrant Labourers, Suo Motu Writ Petition (Civil) No. 6 of 2020, order dated Mar. 19, 2024 (India).

allocations, which are discretionary and may vary from year to year. The flagship pension scheme, the Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-dhan, is voluntary and contributory, requiring workers with irregular incomes to make monthly payments over decades in return for a pension of three thousand rupees a month after the age of sixty.[38] The experience of the construction workers' welfare cess also shows that collecting money is not the same as spending it on workers; the Supreme Court has expressed serious concern about the large unspent balances lying with welfare boards and the failure to register and benefit construction workers.[39] Without an assured and transparent source of funding, the Social Security Fund under section 141 risks becoming another account rather than a guarantee.

E. Gig and Platform Workers: Recognition with Conditions

The recognition of gig and platform workers is the most celebrated feature of the Code, and rightly so. However, the eligibility threshold of ninety days with one aggregator, or one hundred and twenty days across aggregators, may exclude a substantial share of the workers it seeks to protect, such as students, women working part-time, and those who move in and out of platform work. Workers who divide their time across several platforms may also find it harder to establish continuous engagement with any one of them. The aggregator contribution, though provided for in the Code, depends upon further notification for its commencement and rate.[40] Parallel State statutes impose their own welfare fees on aggregators, raising questions about overlap and harmonisation that neither level of government has fully addressed.

F. Federal Fragmentation and the Problem of Portability

Because social security is a concurrent subject, the unorganised worker today faces a patchwork of central schemes, State welfare boards and, for platform workers, separate State statutes. This plurality permits experimentation, but it also creates fragmentation. Benefits linked to State registration, such as those of construction workers' welfare boards, are often difficult to carry across State borders. For an inter-State migrant who works in one State for part of the year and returns home for the rest, entitlement can effectively lapse with each move.

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[38] Ministry of Labour and Employment, Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-dhan (PM-SYM) Scheme (2019) (India).

[39] National Campaign Committee for Central Legislation on Construction Labour v. Union of India, (2018) 5 SCC 607 (India).

[40] *See* EPF Compliance in the Gig Economy: Is India's New Social Security Framework Enough?, King Stubb & Kasiva (Aug. 18, 2026), https://ksandk.com/labour-employment/gig-workers-epf-code-social-security-2026/.

The One Nation One Ration Card system shows that portability is administratively achievable when the system is designed for it; most social security benefits for unorganised workers are not yet designed in this way.

G. The Gendered Gap

Women form the majority of e-Shram registrants and are concentrated in the most precarious forms of work, including home-based production, domestic work and unpaid care. The maternity benefit chapter of the Code applies to establishments, leaving most women in the unorganised sector dependent on scheme-based cash transfers with limited coverage. Domestic workers, who work in private homes and often for several households, still lack a dedicated central law, and India has not ratified the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189).[41] The absence of a gender lens in the design of schemes means that the gap between registration and protection is likely to be widest for women.

H. Awareness, Grievance Redress and Enforcement

Finally, rights that are unknown cannot be claimed. Many unorganised workers are unaware of the schemes for which they are eligible, and the Code's provisions for helplines and facilitation centres depend on effective implementation by the appropriate Governments. Unlike organised sector benefits, which are backed by inspection, recovery and adjudication mechanisms, scheme-based benefits for unorganised workers lack a clear forum before which a worker can complain of wrongful denial. Without accessible grievance redress, an entitlement on paper may never become a payment in hand.

VI. THE JUDICIAL RESPONSE

Courts have played an important corrective role. During the COVID-19 pandemic, when the plight of stranded migrant workers drew national attention, the Supreme Court took *suo motu* cognisance of their condition. In its judgment of 29 June 2021, the Court directed the Union Government to complete the development of the National Database of Unorganised Workers, required registration of unorganised and migrant workers to be completed by 31 December 2021, and directed implementation of the One Nation One Ration Card scheme and

[41] Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), June 16, 2011, 2955 U.N.T.S. 407.

the provision of dry rations and community kitchens.[42] In subsequent orders, the Court directed States that had lagged behind in registration to complete the exercise and to cooperate with the Union.[43] Its continuing supervision of the construction workers' cess has similarly pressed for registration and utilisation of welfare funds.[44] Associations of app-based workers have also approached the Court seeking recognition of gig workers as unorganised workers entitled to social security.[45]

These interventions demonstrate the value of judicial oversight in a field where executive implementation has often been slow. They also reveal its limits. Continuing mandamus can push governments to register workers and distribute rations in a crisis, but it cannot substitute for a coherent statutory design that defines entitlements, assigns financing responsibility and creates enforcement machinery. That task belongs to the legislature and the executive.

VII. THE WAY FORWARD

First, Chapter IX should be amended to set out a statutory floor of social protection for every unorganised worker, covering at minimum essential health care, maternity benefit, death and disability cover and a basic old age pension, consistent with Recommendation No. 202. Schemes may build upon this floor, but the floor itself should be a matter of right and not of discretion.

Second, the Government should notify schemes under sections 109 and 114 within fixed timelines, and should report annually to Parliament on the schemes notified, the number of workers covered, the benefits actually paid and the funds utilised. Such reporting would bring transparency to an area where outcomes are currently difficult to measure.

Third, financing must be assured. A tripartite model, drawing upon earmarked budgetary support from the Union and the States, contributions from aggregators and principal

[42] In re Problems & Miseries of Migrant Labourers, Suo Motu Writ Petition (Civil) No. 6 of 2020, decided on June 29, 2021 (India).
[43] In re Problems & Miseries of Migrant Labourers, 2022 INSC 742 (India).
[44] National Campaign Committee for Central Legislation on Construction Labour, (2018) 5 SCC 607.
[45] Indian Federation of App-Based Transport Workers v. Union of India, Writ Petition (Civil) No. 1068 of 2021 (India).

employers, and existing cess collections, should feed the Social Security Fund, with its accounts subject to periodic audit and public disclosure.

Fourth, e-Shram should be transformed from a database into a delivery platform. Registration should result in automatic enrolment into health insurance and accident and life cover, with premiums subsidised for low-income workers, and with simple procedures for correcting errors and for those whose identity documents are incomplete.

Fifth, benefits must be portable. A single identifier should carry a worker's contributions and entitlements across States and across occupations, on the model of the One Nation One Ration Card system. The Centre and the States should also harmonise their gig worker laws so that aggregators are not subject to overlapping levies and workers are not left uncertain about which body is responsible for them.

Sixth, the eligibility thresholds for platform workers should be revisited. Pro-rata benefits linked to actual days of work would protect part-time and intermittent workers without undermining the financial sustainability of schemes. Seventh, scheme design should be gender-responsive, with universal maternity support for women workers, recognition of care work and serious consideration of ratifying Convention No. 189. Eighth, accessible grievance redress should be created, through facilitation centres, worker organisations and the legal services authorities, so that wrongful denial of benefits can be challenged quickly and at low cost.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The Code on Social Security, 2020 represents a meaningful step in India's long effort to extend protection beyond the organised workforce. It gives statutory recognition to gig and platform workers, anchors a national database of unorganised workers, and declares an ambition of universal coverage. These are real gains, and the coming into force of the Code and its Rules has given that ambition legal shape. Yet the analysis in this paper shows that the gap between recognition and protection remains wide. Entitlements continue to depend on schemes yet to be notified or funded; registration has outpaced delivery; financing is uncertain; and the workers most in need, including migrants and women, face the greatest obstacles in claiming what the law promises.

The constitutional vision of a social order based on justice requires more than counting the invisible workforce. It requires a legal framework in which every worker, regardless of where or for whom they work, can claim a minimum floor of security as a matter of right. If the Code is implemented with this vision, through defined entitlements, assured financing, portable benefits and effective grievance redress, the gaps identified here can be closed. Until then, India's unorganised workers will remain visible on the database, but not yet fully visible in law.