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## MAGAZINE NOTES

# India's Comprehensive Empowerment Model for Workers

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CURATED &amp; WRITTEN BY

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# India's Comprehensive Empowerment Model for Workers

 **Kurukshetra** Chapter 3 · 2 min read ·

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The labour chapter marks a structural moment: **29 central labour laws consolidated into 4 Labour Codes, with full rollout by April 2026**, the largest rewrite of India's worker-protection floor since independence.

## WHAT EACH CODE CHANGES

| CODE                                 | KEY PROVISION                                                                                 |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Code on Wages, 2019</b>           | Statutory minimum wage for all sectors; basic pay must be at least 50 percent of total salary |
| <b>Code on Social Security, 2020</b> | First-time statutory coverage of <b>gig and platform workers</b>                              |
| <b>Industrial Relations Code</b>     | Fixed-term employment with full benefits; gratuity after 1 year for fixed-term staff          |
| <b>OSH Code</b>                      | Mandatory appointment letters; overtime at twice the standard rate                            |

The 50-percent basic-pay rule quietly restructures take-home versus retirement saving: PF and gratuity contributions rise as allowances shrink.

## THE EMPLOYMENT PUSH ALONGSIDE

- **PM Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana (PMVBRY, 2025):** Rs 1 lakh crore outlay targeting **3.5 crore+ jobs**, with incentives up to **Rs 15,000 for first-time employees**
- For rural workers, the codes ride on the same formalisation rails (e-Shram, EPFO/ESIC expansion) that DBT built

## MAINS ANGLE

**Critical analysis:** codification is not enforcement: inspector capacity, state rule-making lags and the informal sector's 90 percent share mean the floor exists on paper before it exists in fields and kitchens. Gig-worker social security still awaits funded schemes, not just enabling clauses. **Way forward:** aggregator-

financed social security funds with portable accounts, state adoption scorecards, and SHG-mediated awareness so rural women workers actually claim the new entitlements.

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#### THE CONSOLIDATION:

29 labour laws merged into 4 Codes; full rollout by April 2026

Code on Wages 2019: minimum wage all sectors; basic pay  $\geq$  50 percent of salary

#### NEW PROTECTIONS:

Gig and platform workers covered (Code on Social Security 2020)

Mandatory appointment letters; overtime at 2x; gratuity after 1 year for fixed-term employees

#### EMPLOYMENT SCHEME:

PMVBRY (2025): Rs 1 lakh crore, 3.5 crore+ jobs target, up to Rs 15,000 incentive for first-time employees

Sources: Kurukshestra / Publications Division , Ministry of Labour & Employment



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