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# Labour Codes Implemented, But Workers Still Vulnerable

 THE HINDU

14 June 2026

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CURATED &amp; WRITTEN BY

**Bharat Choudhary**

UPSC Educator &amp; Content Creator

 [linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)

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 The Hindu

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GS2

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 Source: [ujiyari.com](http://ujiyari.com) — Free UPSC & State PCS Current Affairs


## INTERVIEW ANGLE

*"A law on paper and protection in practice are different things. With the Labour Codes now in force, do they genuinely secure the most vulnerable workers, or do they formalise their vulnerability?"*

 Source: [Original editorial](#)
[The Hindu](#)
 Every fact web-verified against primary sources

[HOW](#)

## WHY THIS MATTERS NOW

The four **Labour Codes** are now notified and in force, but gaps leave **gig workers, plantation labour and trade unions** inadequately protected. For an aspirant, this is a GS2 and GS3 case on **labour reform, social security and the gig economy**, and the gap between codification and real protection.

## THE CRUX IN 60 WORDS

The four Labour Codes consolidate **29 old laws** and are now in force, simplifying the legal tangle. But **gig workers** stay outside core protections with thin funded security, **fixed-term contracts** lack a minimum tenure, and a high **union-recognition threshold** weakens bargaining. Codification has outrun protection. The fix: funded gig security, fixed-term tenure, lower thresholds, and enforcement.

## THE ISSUE, DECODED

CONCEPT	WHAT IT MEANS	WHY IT MATTERS
<b>The four Codes</b>	Wages, social security, IR, OSH	The consolidated labour framework
<b>Gig worker classification</b>	How platform workers are categorised	Keeps them outside core protections
<b>Fixed-term tenure</b>	Minimum length of a fixed contract	Its absence enables insecure work
<b>Union recognition threshold</b>	The bar for a union to be recognised	A high bar weakens collective bargaining

## THE ANALYSIS: CODIFICATION VERSUS PROTECTION

- ❶ **A real consolidation.** Merging 29 laws into four codes simplifies a genuine tangle and, in principle, widens coverage.
- ❷ **Gig workers fall short.** Promised social security lacks the funded, portable schemes that would make it real.
- ❸ **Fixed-term insecurity.** No minimum tenure means workers can be cycled through short contracts.
- ❹ **Weakened bargaining.** A high union-recognition threshold undercuts the worker's main countervailing power.

## DATA AND INSTITUTIONS VAULT

*the Code on Wages, 2019; the Industrial Relations Code, 2020; the Code on Social Security, 2020; the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020, consolidating 29 central labour laws. The gig provision: the Code on Social Security, 2020 was the first central law to define and cover gig and platform workers, though funded schemes remain limited. The right: collective bargaining flows from the freedom of association (Article 19(1)©). Concept: informal sector; portable social security; ease of doing business.*

## THE DEBATE

**Argument for the codes:** They simplify 29 laws, expand covered workers in principle, and balance protection with the flexibility needed for job creation.

**Argument that gaps remain:** Gig workers lack funded security, fixed-term work lacks minimum tenure, and a high union-recognition threshold weakens bargaining, leaving the most vulnerable exposed.

## HOW TO THINK ABOUT IT

Frame the answer around **codification versus protection**. Credit the consolidation, then identify the specific gaps (gig security, fixed-term tenure, union threshold, enforcement) and the concrete fixes. Avoid both “reform is complete” and “reform is meaningless”.

## THE DIAGRAM IN WORDS

Picture a new, tidy rulebook handed to a stadium full of workers. The book is clearer than the old pile of pamphlets, but the back rows, gig workers, fixed-term hires, the unorganised, find their pages are mostly blank where the protections should be.

## PYQ LINKAGE

UPSC has asked about labour reforms, the gig economy and social security. This editorial connects those to the gap between the codes on paper and protection in practice.

## THE ONE-LINE TAKEAWAY

The Labour Codes are in force, but codification is not protection; funding gig workers’ security, securing fixed-term tenure and strengthening bargaining are what finish the job.

Source: Labour Codes Implemented, But Workers Still Vulnerable — [Ujyari.com](http://Ujyari.com) | Free UPSC & State PCS Editorial Analysis

### ● KEY ARGUMENTS AT A GLANCE

Although the four Labour Codes have been notified and their rules rolled out, critical gaps leave gig workers, plantation labour and trade unions inadequately protected, showing that codification has not yet translated into real protection for the most vulnerable.



**SUPPORTING**

- Gig and platform workers remain classified in a way that keeps them outside core protections, with social security promised in principle but thin in funded practice.
- The absence of a minimum tenure for fixed-term employment leaves workers exposed to short, insecure contracts without the stability of regular employment.
- A high threshold for trade-union recognition weakens collective bargaining, the worker's principal countervailing power.


**COUNTER**

The government argues that the codes simplify a tangle of 29 old laws, expand the universe of covered workers, and balance worker protection with the ease of doing business needed for job creation.


**WAY FORWARD**

Fund gig-worker social security properly, set a minimum tenure for fixed-term contracts, lower the union-recognition threshold, and ensure enforcement capacity so that codification becomes genuine protection.


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**MAINS ANSWER FRAMEWORK**
**QUESTION**

*"Codification is not the same as protection." Examine the gaps in India's four Labour Codes for gig workers, fixed-term and informal labour. (250 words)*

**INTRODUCTION**

Consolidating 29 labour laws into four codes is a real administrative achievement. But a worker does not live in the statute book, and the test of the codes is whether they protect the people most exposed.

**BODY**

The four Labour Codes, on wages, social security, industrial relations, and occupational safety, have been notified and their implementation rules rolled out, completing a long-running reform. The case for them is genuine: they simplify an unwieldy legal tangle, in principle expand the universe of covered workers, and attempt to balance protection with the flexibility that employers say job creation needs. Yet the gaps are where the most vulnerable fall through. Gig and platform workers, the fastest-growing segment of the new economy, remain classified in a way that keeps them outside core protections; social security is promised but the funded, portable schemes that would make it real are thin. Fixed-term employment, now formally recognised, lacks a minimum tenure, so workers can be cycled through short, insecure contracts without the stability of regular jobs. And a high threshold for trade-union recognition weakens collective bargaining, the worker’s main source of countervailing power against the employer.

The result is that codification has run ahead of protection. Closing the distance requires concrete steps: properly funded and portable social security for gig workers, a minimum tenure for fixed-term contracts, a lower union-recognition threshold, and the enforcement capacity, inspectors, grievance systems, that turns rights on paper into rights in practice.

A code is only as good as the protection it delivers to the worker who most needs it.

### CONCLUSION

The Labour Codes are in force, but the work is unfinished. Funding gig workers’ security, securing fixed-term tenure and strengthening collective bargaining are what will turn codification into protection.

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CURATED &amp; WRITTEN BY

## Bharat Choudhary

UPSC Educator &amp; Content Creator

[linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)[Read Full Article on Ujiyari →](#)<https://ujiyari.com/editorials/2026/06/th-labour-codes-workers-vulnerable/>

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