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# e-Shram Portal Completes Five Years With 31.89 Crore Registrations

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SOCIAL ISSUES

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# e-Shram Portal Completes Five Years With 31.89 Crore Registrations

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✓ Every fact web-verified against primary sources

The **e-Shram** portal completed **five years** on **August 26, 2026**, having been launched in 2021, on August 26 of that year. The Ministry of Labour and Employment reported **31.89 crore registrations** on the National Database of Unorganised Workers.

## WHAT E-SHRAM IS

e-Shram is India's first **National Database of Unorganised Workers (NDUW)**, launched in 2021, on **August 26** of that year, by the **Ministry of Labour and Employment** and built with the **National Informatics Centre**.

| FEATURE         | DETAIL                                              |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Identifier      | Universal Account Number (UAN), 12 digits, portable |
| Authentication  | Aadhaar-seeded                                      |
| Eligibility age | 16 to 59 years                                      |
| Excluded        | EPFO or ESIC members, and income-tax payers         |
| Portal          | eshram.gov.in                                       |

The exclusion criteria define the target population precisely: e-Shram covers workers who are **outside the formal social security net**, which is exactly the population that no existing contributory scheme reaches.

## THE NUMBERS AT FIVE YEARS

| METRIC                            | FIGURE                                                         |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Total registrations               | 31.89 crore                                                    |
| Platform and gig workers enrolled | Approximately 11.5 lakh                                        |
| Women                             | 54.28 per cent                                                 |
| Men                               | 45.72 per cent                                                 |
| Aged 18 to 40                     | 55.21 per cent                                                 |
| Highest registering States        | Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra |

Against an estimated unorganised workforce of roughly **38 crore**, 31.89 crore represents about **84 per cent** coverage of the target universe. The **majority-women** composition is notable, since women are systematically under-counted in conventional labour force statistics.

## CONVERGENCE ARCHITECTURE

e-Shram is positioned as a **one-stop solution** integrating welfare, employment, skilling and pension services:

| SCHEME OR PLATFORM                           | PURPOSE                         |
|----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| PM-SYM (Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-dhan) | Pension for unorganised workers |
| PMJJBY                                       | Life insurance                  |
| PMSBY                                        | Accident insurance              |
| PM SVANidhi                                  | Street vendor credit            |
| Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY                       | Health cover                    |
| National Career Service (NCS)                | Job matching                    |
| Skill India Digital Hub                      | Skilling                        |
| myScheme                                     | Scheme discovery                |

**PM-SYM** is worth memorising in detail: a voluntary, contributory pension of **₹3,000 per month after age 60**, with **50:50 matching** between subscriber and Central Government, for entry age **18 to 40** and monthly income up to **₹15,000**.

## THE STATUTORY BACKDROP

The **Code on Social Security, 2020** is the first Indian law to define “**gig worker**” and “**platform worker**”, at **Sections 2(35) and 2(61)** respectively. It provides for **aggregator contributions of 1 to 2 per cent of turnover, capped at 5 per cent** of the amount paid to gig and platform workers.

The **Union Budget 2025-26** announced identity cards, e-Shram registration and **Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY** healthcare for approximately **1 crore gig workers**.

## CRITICAL ANALYSIS

**Registration is not entitlement.** This is the central critique. A database of 31.89 crore has value only if it functions as the actual delivery rail for benefits. The persistent gap is that most registrants draw no scheme benefit through the portal, which means **enrolment metrics risk substituting for outcome metrics**. A registration target is easy to hit and easy to report; a benefits-per-registrant figure is neither.

**Portability is the real prize, and it is incomplete.** Inter-State migrant workers lose entitlements at State borders. e-Shram together with **One Nation One Ration Card** is the architecture for portable social security, but food portability has advanced considerably further than pension and insurance portability.

**The gig-economy provisions remain largely un-operationalised.** The Social Security Code’s aggregator levy has not been given effect at the Centre, while States have legislated separately: **Rajasthan’s Platform Based Gig Workers (Registration and Welfare) Act, 2023**, Karnataka’s 2024 legislation, and initiatives in Telangana and Jharkhand. The result is a patchwork rather than a national floor. **NITI Aayog’s 2022 report, “India’s Booming Gig and Platform Economy”**, projected the gig workforce at **2.35 crore by 2029-30**, up from **77 lakh in 2020-21**.

**Digital exclusion operates at the bottom of the distribution.** Aadhaar seeding excludes workers with mismatched or missing biometrics, a group weighted toward manual labourers whose fingerprints degrade with work. Self-registration excludes the digitally illiterate, precisely the cohort the scheme most needs to reach. Assisted registration through **Common Service Centres** must therefore be audited for exclusion error, not only for throughput.

## UPSC RELEVANCE

**GS Paper 2 (Governance and Social Justice):** Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections; mechanisms, laws and institutions for the protection of vulnerable sections.

**GS Paper 3 (Economy):** Employment; inclusive growth.

**Prelims focus:** Launch date and parent ministry; UAN digit count; eligibility age band and exclusions; the 54.28 per cent women share; PM-SYM parameters; the Sections of the Social Security Code defining gig and platform workers.

**Mains angle:** Argue that India has solved the **identification problem** and not yet the **entitlement problem**. Registration builds the rail; benefit delivery is the train. Use the gap between 31.89 crore registrations and actual benefit uptake as the evidence.

### ★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

#### E-SHRAM:

Launched in 2021, on August 26 of that year, by the Ministry of Labour and Employment

India's first National Database of Unorganised Workers (NDUW)

Identifier: Universal Account Number (UAN), 12 digits

Eligibility: age 16 to 59; excludes EPFO/ESIC members and income-tax payers

#### FIVE-YEAR DATA:

31.89 crore registrations; approximately 11.5 lakh platform and gig workers

Women 54.28 per cent, men 45.72 per cent; 55.21 per cent aged 18 to 40

Top registering State: Uttar Pradesh

Estimated unorganised workforce: roughly 38 crore

#### PM-SYM:

Pension of ₹3,000 per month after age 60; 50:50 subscriber-Government matching

Entry age 18 to 40; monthly income ceiling ₹15,000

#### CODE ON SOCIAL SECURITY, 2020:

First Indian law to define "gig worker" (Section 2(35)) and "platform worker" (Section 2(61))

Aggregator contribution: 1 to 2 per cent of turnover, capped at 5 per cent of payments to gig and platform workers

#### OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

Rajasthan's Platform Based Gig Workers (Registration and Welfare) Act, 2023 was the first State law of its kind

NITI Aayog (2022) projected 2.35 crore gig workers by 2029-30, from 77 lakh in 2020-21

Budget 2025-26: identity cards and PM-JAY cover for about 1 crore gig workers

*Sources: Ministry of Labour and Employment, PIB*

Source: e-Shram Portal Completes Five Years With 31.89 Crore Registrations — Ujyari.com | Free UPSC & State PCS Current Affairs

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