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Social Security Boards for Gig Workers: Composition, Functions and Benefits

Social Security Boards Latest News

The Ministry of Labour and Employment has notified the constitution of two key bodies: the National Social Security Board (NSSB) for unorganised workers (40 members) and a separate NSSB for gig and platform workers (22 members).

Both boards are tasked with designing, monitoring, and recommending welfare schemes to bridge India's long-standing social security gap for workers outside the formal employment structure.

Background: The Code on Social Security

Notified last year (November 2025), alongside three other labour codes, the Code on Social Security merged nine existing social security laws to cover both organised and unorganised sectors.

For the first time, the Code legally defined "gig workers" and "platform workers."

It mandated a national registration system and a dedicated social security fund for unorganised and gig workers.

Composition of the Boards

National Social Security Board (Unorganised Workers) — 40 members:

Chairperson: Union Minister for Labour and Employment

Vice-Chairperson: Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment

Includes employee and employer representatives.

Nominated Members:

Unorganised sector workers: 7 representatives representing workers in the unorganised sector

Employers of unorganised sector: 7 representatives representing employers

Eminent persons from civil society: 7 representatives

Parliamentary representatives: 2 members representing the Lok Sabha and 1 member representing the Rajya Sabha (3 total)

Central Government Ministries and Departments: 10 members representing concerned central ministries and departments

State Governments: 5 members representing State Governments

Union Territories: 1 member representing the Union territories [1, 2]

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National Social Security Board (Gig and Platform Workers) — 22 members:

Union Labour Minister chairs it; Labour Secretary serves as Vice-Chairperson (same structure as the unorganised workers' board).

Industry representation: Aggregators and quick-commerce operators like Eternal (Zomato's parent), Zepto, Swiggy, and Urban Company.

Worker representation: BMS, the Indian Federation of App-Based Transport Workers (IFAT), and the National Front of Indian Trade Unions (NFITU).

Functions and Powers of the Boards

As per the Code, the NSSB must meet at least thrice a year.

Core mandate: Recommend that the Central government frame suitable schemes for different categories of unorganised, gig, and platform workers.

Key Responsibilities

- Monitor social welfare schemes for unorganised workers.
- Review expenditure from the social security fund and its accounts.
- Review record-keeping functions related to gig workers' welfare schemes performed at the state level.
- Advise the Central government on matters arising from administering the Code.
- Undertake other functions as assigned by the Central government from time to time.

The Social Security Fund: Who Pays, and for What?

The Code envisions a Social Security Fund for gig and platform workers, funded through:

- Central and State government contributions.
- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds.
- Fines collected through compounding.

Aggregator Contributions:

Companies like Amazon, Flipkart, Swiggy, and Zomato must contribute 1-2% of their annual turnover to the fund — with total contribution capped at 5% of the amount payable to workers.

Covered benefits the Centre may frame schemes for include:

- Life and disability cover.
- Accident insurance.
- Health and maternity benefits.
- Old age protection.
- Crèche facilities.

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Expanded EPFO Coverage: A Major Structural Shift

EPFO (Employees' Provident Fund Organisation) provisions now apply to all establishments with 20+ employees, regardless of industry type.

Previously, EPFO applied only to establishments listed in Schedule 1 of the Act — primarily manufacturing sector entities.

This restriction has been removed under the Code on Social Security, bringing both organised and unorganised sector workers under the social security umbrella.

Schemes will be funded wholly or partly by Central/State governments or CSR contributions.

What Changes for Gig Workers Specifically

Gig and platform workers will receive social security cover for the first time in India's labour history.

Mandatory Registration:

Platforms must work with the government to register all gig and platform workers.

Technology Enabler:

Registration will use an Aadhaar-linked Universal Account Number (UAN) — ensuring benefits remain portable across states, crucial given gig workers' frequent inter-state mobility for work.

Scale of Impact:

As per NITI Aayog, India's gig economy is projected to employ 2.35 crore (23.5 million) workers by 2029-30 — making this reform potentially transformative for a rapidly growing workforce segment.

Conclusion

The notification of these two Social Security Boards operationalises one of the most significant labour reforms in recent Indian history — extending formal social security protections to a workforce segment that has historically operated entirely outside such safeguards.

By mandating aggregator contributions, enabling portable Aadhaar-linked registration, and expanding EPFO coverage beyond manufacturing-sector limits, the Code addresses a genuine structural gap as India's gig economy approaches a projected 2.35 crore workers by 2029-30.

However, the real test will lie in implementation — particularly ensuring that board composition remains genuinely representative of worker interests, and that the promised benefits translate into accessible, timely support for a workforce often characterised by precarious, fragmented employment.