Daily Mains Practice Answer 31-07-2026

Q. Examine the significance of the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Convention on Decent Work in the Platform Economy for the future of gig work. (150 words, 10 marks)

Direction: Intro-----Provisions + Significance----Conclusion.

Introduction:

Describe briefly about ILO’s Convention on Decent Work in the platform economy.

It is the first binding international treaty written for the rider, driver, picker and data-labeller who earns a living through an app.

Main Body

Key Provisions of the convention

- Coverage – Covers all digital labour platform workers (employee, dependent contractor, or self-employed).
- Fundamental Principles & Rights at Work – Guarantees freedom of association, collective bargaining, elimination of forced labour, child labour, discrimination, etc.
- Minimum & fair wages and on-time payment.
- Occupational safety and health protections.
- Social security benefits equal to comparable workers.
- Algorithmic transparency – Platforms must explain automated decisions and keep a human in the loop.
- Correct worker classification based on actual work performed, not company labels.
- Data Protection & Privacy – Protects workers' personal data, limits unnecessary surveillance.
- Protection from Violence and Harassment (physical, psychological, sexual, and online harassment).
- Effective Dispute Resolution and Access to Justice
- Cross-border Platform Work – Encourages international cooperation to regulate transnational digital labour platforms and protect migrant platform workers.

Significance of this convention

- Recognition of Gig Workers' Rights,
- Guaranteed fair and decent working conditions,
- Social Security for platform workers,

- Strengthens collective bargaining,
- Creates a global regulatory benchmark,
- Strengthen data protection and privacy.

Challenges

- Difficulty in defining employment relationships.
- Compliance burden on small platforms.
- Cross-border enforcement issues of labour standards.
- Balancing worker protection with platform innovation.
- Ensuring compliance by global digital platforms.

Measures need to be taken

- Ratify and align domestic laws with ILO standards.
- Create a portable social security framework funded jointly by workers, platforms, and government.
- Establish grievance redressal mechanisms and algorithmic audits.
- Operationalise the Code on Social Security, 2020 with effective schemes for gig workers.

Conclusion:

Conclude in a positive and progressive manner – like ILO Convention marks a paradigm shift from platform-centric flexibility to worker-centric digital governance (or) Use some quotes related to labourers - "The future of work must be digital, but it must also be decent." (or) "Innovation cannot come at the cost of labour rights; technology must serve people, not replace protections."

Value added:

India's Gig Economy

- Roughly 7.7 million gig workers in 2020–21, projected to reach 23.5 million by 2029–30 (~6.7% of non-agricultural workforce).
- 39% earn Rs. 10,000–Rs. 25,000/month, 34% earn Rs. 25,000–Rs. 40,000/month, often through 12-hour shifts with fuel costs borne by workers.
- Only 15% have any social security coverage.
- Workers face no accident cover, no sick pay, no pension, and risk sudden deactivation by algorithms.

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