

The Future of Work in the Age of Artificial Intelligence: Labour Law Challenges in Automation and Platform Work

Md Abu Amir^{1*}, Dr. Karavi Barman²

¹Research Scholar, Address: P.G. Dept. of Law, Gauhati University, Gopinath Bordoloi Nagar, Jalukbari, Guwahati- 781014, Assam, India. Email: abuamir459@gmail.com

²Assistant Professor of Law, P.G. Dept. of Law, Gauhati University, Guwahati, Email: karavi.barman@gauhati.ac.in

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ABSTRACT:

The rapid development of Artificial Intelligence (AI), automation and digital platforms is transforming the nature and organisation of work. While these technologies create new opportunities for productivity, employment and flexible work arrangements, they also raise significant labour-law concerns relating to job displacement, employment classification, algorithmic management, worker surveillance, remuneration, social security, privacy and collective representation. This paper examines the changing relationship between technology and labour law, with particular emphasis on automation and platform work in the Indian context. It seeks to examine whether existing labour-law frameworks are adequate to protect workers in an increasingly AI-driven labour market and to identify the legal and regulatory measures required to address emerging challenges.

The paper adopts a doctrinal research methodology, relying primarily on legislation, constitutional provisions, judicial decisions, international labour standards and relevant policy and scholarly materials. Particular attention is given to the Code on Social Security, 2020, which expressly recognises gig and platform workers, as well as the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023. The study also examines comparative developments, particularly the European Union Platform Work Directive, 2024, and the International Labour Organization's Decent Work in the Platform Economy Convention, 2026 (No. 193), the first international labour standard specifically dedicated to the platform economy.

The paper argues that technological transformation should not result in a corresponding reduction of labour protection. Its findings indicate that traditional distinctions between employees and independent contractors may be insufficient where digital platforms exercise substantial technological control over workers. The study further identifies the need for greater transparency in algorithmic decision-making, meaningful human oversight, protection of worker data, portable social security, reskilling opportunities, effective collective representation and accessible remedies. It concludes that India requires a human-centred and technology-responsive labour-law framework capable of balancing technological innovation with decent work, equality, social security and worker dignity.

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1. Introduction

The nature of work has undergone significant transformation with the rapid development of digital technologies, artificial intelligence (AI), automation and online labour platforms. Technological innovation is no longer confined to improving the efficiency of production; it increasingly influences how work is allocated, supervised, evaluated and remunerated. Artificial intelligence can perform tasks traditionally undertaken by human workers, assist employers in recruitment and decision-making, and analyse large volumes of workplace data. At the same time, digital labour platforms have created new forms of employment in which workers obtain assignments, communicate with customers, receive payments and are evaluated through digital applications. These developments have generated new opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship, but they have also raised fundamental questions concerning job security, employment status, wages, social security, privacy, occupational safety and the effective protection of labour rights.

The International Labour Organization (ILO), through its Global Commission on the Future of Work, has recognised technological transformation as one of the major forces reshaping the world of work. Its report *Work for a Brighter Future* emphasises the emergence of new forms of work, the need for lifelong learning and the importance of universal social protection in creating a human-centred future of work. The ILO has consequently argued that technological progress should be accompanied by appropriate institutions and policies capable of ensuring dignity, security, equality and social justice for workers. The future of work, therefore, cannot be understood exclusively as a question of technological advancement; it is equally a question of how law and institutions respond to changing patterns of work.

Artificial intelligence and automation present a particularly complex challenge for labour law

because they can alter the traditional relationship between the employer and the worker. In the conventional employment relationship, managerial authority is generally exercised by identifiable human actors who determine working conditions, allocate tasks, supervise performance and take disciplinary decisions. In an increasingly automated workplace, some of these functions may be performed through algorithms and AI-based systems. An algorithm may determine the allocation of work, assess performance, recommend remuneration, establish productivity targets or contribute to decisions concerning continuation or termination of work. Consequently, the traditional concept of managerial control requires reconsideration when significant aspects of workplace governance are exercised through technological systems.

The emergence of platform work further complicates this relationship. Digital labour platforms have created work arrangements that often do not fit neatly within the conventional categories of employee and independent contractor. Workers providing transportation, delivery, domestic, professional or other services through digital platforms may exercise a degree of flexibility in deciding when to work, while simultaneously being subject to extensive technological control through ratings, incentives, automated task allocation, pricing mechanisms and account suspension. This creates an important legal question: whether the contractual description of a worker as an independent contractor should determine the worker's legal status, or whether the actual degree of control and dependence exercised through the platform should be considered.

The problem is particularly significant in India, where the expansion of the digital economy has coincided with an evolving labour-law framework. The Code on Social Security, 2020 represents an important legislative development because it expressly recognises the categories of “gig worker” and “platform worker”. Section 2(35) defines a gig worker in relation to work performed

outside a traditional employer–employee relationship, while section 2(61) defines a platform worker in relation to work arrangements facilitated through an online platform. The Code further provides for social-security schemes for gig and platform workers, including matters such as life and disability cover, accident insurance, health and maternity benefits and old-age protection. It also provides a framework for contributions by aggregators towards specified social-security schemes.

The statutory recognition of gig and platform workers is significant because it acknowledges that contemporary labour markets cannot be addressed entirely through the traditional employer–employee model. Nevertheless, recognition as a separate statutory category also raises further questions. The creation of a distinct category of gig and platform workers does not, by itself, resolve whether workers who are subject to substantial control by a digital platform should receive the broader rights traditionally associated with employees. It therefore becomes necessary to examine whether the existing framework adequately addresses not only social-security concerns but also wages, working conditions, occupational safety, collective representation, employment security and protection against arbitrary or technologically mediated decisions.

Another emerging concern is algorithmic management. The use of automated systems in the organisation of work can make managerial decision-making less visible to workers. A worker may know the outcome of an algorithmic decision- for example, a reduced allocation of assignments, lower ratings or deactivation of an account- without knowing the criteria or reasoning that produced the decision. This creates concerns regarding transparency, accountability, procedural fairness and the ability of workers to challenge adverse decisions. The European Union's Platform Work Directive, adopted in 2024, provides an important comparative development in this regard. The Directive establishes rules concerning the determination of employment status and

introduces safeguards concerning algorithmic management, including human oversight and workers' ability to contest certain automated decisions. The Directive also requires employment-status assessment to focus on the actual performance of work and the manner in which automated monitoring or decision-making systems organise the work, rather than merely relying upon the contractual designation of the relationship.

These international developments demonstrate that labour law is increasingly required to respond not only to the question of who is a worker, but also to the question of how technological systems exercise control over workers. The distinction is important for India because the traditional emphasis on contractual classification may become inadequate where control is exercised indirectly through algorithms and digital infrastructure. The legal challenge is therefore not simply to determine whether platform workers fall within an existing category, but to identify the appropriate legal principles for regulating technologically mediated work.

The constitutional dimension of this transformation is equally important. The Indian Constitution provides a normative foundation for the protection of dignity, equality, freedom of association and social justice. Articles 14, 19(1)(c), 21, 38, 39, 41, 42 and 43 collectively provide an important constitutional context for examining labour conditions and the protection of workers. Although the Directive Principles of State Policy are not directly enforceable in the same manner as fundamental rights, they provide significant guidance concerning the State's responsibility towards social and economic justice and humane conditions of work. The development of AI and platform work therefore requires consideration of whether existing labour-law mechanisms continue to give meaningful effect to these constitutional values in technologically mediated workplaces.

The central problem addressed by this research is consequently the regulatory gap between technological transformation and existing labour-law concepts. Automation may change the demand for human labour and create new skill

requirements, while platformisation may fragment the conventional employment relationship. At the same time, algorithmic management can reproduce forms of managerial control through technological systems without necessarily creating a legally recognised employer–employee relationship. These developments challenge assumptions upon which conventional labour law has historically been constructed.

Against this background, the present article examines the following research questions:

1. how is AI-driven automation transforming traditional employment relationships and what labour-law issues arise from this transformation?
2. to what extent does the existing Indian legal framework adequately protect workers engaged in platform-based work?
3. how does the classification of gig and platform workers affect their access to labour rights and social security?
4. what lessons can India draw from emerging international approaches to employment status and algorithmic management?
5. what legal and regulatory reforms are necessary to reconcile technological innovation with the protection of workers' rights?

The article adopts a doctrinal legal research methodology. It examines primary legal materials, including, constitutional provision, legislation, and relevant subordinate legislation, together with international labour standards. Particular attention is given to the Code on Social Security, 2020 and other relevant labour legislation.

The central argument of the article is that the future of labour law cannot depend exclusively upon the traditional distinction between employee and independent contractor. As AI and digital platforms increasingly mediate the organisation of work, labour regulation must consider the actual nature of control, economic dependence and technological management. The

recognition of gig and platform workers under Indian law represents an important legislative development, but the effectiveness of such recognition depends upon the creation of enforceable rights, adequate social protection and mechanisms capable of addressing algorithmic decision-making. The objective should not be to restrict technological innovation but to ensure that technological progress remains compatible with decent work, human dignity, equality and social justice.

Accordingly, this article seeks to contribute to the emerging literature on AI and labour law by bringing together three interconnected dimensions of the future of work—automation, platform work and algorithmic management. Rather than treating these developments as isolated technological phenomena, the article examines them as challenges to the conceptual foundations and regulatory capacity of labour law. It argues for a human-centred approach in which technological innovation is accompanied by appropriate legal safeguards, effective social protection, transparency in automated decision-making and meaningful mechanisms for workers to assert their rights.

2. Research Objectives

The present study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To examine the emerging role of Artificial Intelligence (AI), automation and digital platforms in transforming the nature and organisation of work.
2. To analyse the impact of AI and automation on employment, including job displacement, job transformation, skill requirements, workplace control and working conditions.
3. To examine the major labour-law challenges arising from platform work, particularly employment classification, algorithmic management, remuneration, social security, privacy, occupational safety and collective representation.
4. To critically analyse the adequacy of the

existing Indian legal framework, particularly the Labour Codes, the Code on Social Security, 2020, and the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, in addressing emerging forms of technologically mediated work.

5. To examine relevant international and comparative legal developments concerning AI, automation and platform work, with particular reference to the ILO framework and the European Union Platform Work Directive, 2024.

6. To identify the regulatory gaps and emerging challenges in protecting workers from the adverse consequences of AI-driven employment and algorithmic management.

7. To suggest appropriate legal and policy measures for developing a human-centred and technology-responsive labour-law framework that balances technological innovation with decent work, social security, equality and worker dignity.

3. Conceptualising Ai, Automation And Platform Work

The emergence of artificial intelligence (AI), automation and digital platforms has significantly changed the manner in which work is organised and performed. These technologies are not limited to replacing physical or repetitive tasks; they increasingly influence recruitment, allocation of work, performance assessment, remuneration and termination of workers. Therefore, a clear understanding of these concepts is necessary to examine their implications for labour law.

3.1 Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence refers broadly to machine-based systems capable of generating outputs such as predictions, recommendations or decisions that may influence real or virtual environments. The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) describe an AI system in these terms and emphasises that such systems may operate with different levels of autonomy.

In the employment context, AI can be used for

several purposes, including recruitment and selection, evaluation of employee performance, workforce planning, fraud detection, customer management and allocation of tasks. AI can therefore influence decisions that were traditionally taken by human managers. This creates new legal questions concerning transparency, discrimination, accountability, privacy and the ability of workers to challenge decisions affecting their employment.

AI should, however, be distinguished from ordinary automation. While automation may involve the performance of a task by a machine or computer without direct human intervention, AI may involve systems capable of generating predictions, recommendations or decisions based on data and specified objectives. Consequently, AI may be regarded as one important component of the broader technological transformation of work rather than being synonymous with all forms of automation.

3.2 Automation and the Transformation of Work

Automation refers to the use of technology to perform tasks or processes that were previously performed, wholly or partly, by human workers. Traditionally, automation was associated with manufacturing and routine physical activities. With developments in digital technologies, however, automation has expanded into administrative, professional and service-sector activities.

The effect of automation on employment is therefore not simply a question of whether machines replace workers. Automation may also change the nature of existing occupations by transferring particular tasks from humans to technological systems while creating new tasks requiring different skills. This transformation makes questions of reskilling, job security, occupational safety and social protection increasingly important within labour law.

The principal legal concern is that traditional labour-law protections have generally been developed around relatively stable employment relationships. Technological transformation may instead produce employment arrangements in

which work is temporary, task-based, remotely performed or mediated through digital systems. The challenge for labour law is consequently to ensure that technological innovation does not result in a corresponding reduction in basic labour protections.

3.3 Platform Work

Platform work refers to work organised through digital platforms that connect the demand for services with individuals who perform those services. The International Labour Organization (ILO) identifies two broad forms of digital labour platforms: online web-based platforms, where work can be performed remotely, and location-based platforms, where services are performed at a particular physical location. Examples include online freelancing, micro-tasking, transportation, delivery and domestic services.

Platform work has introduced a new organisational structure into the labour market. The platform may act as an intermediary between the customer and the person performing the work, while technological systems determine or influence how work is allocated and evaluated. As a result, the conventional distinction between an employee and an independent contractor may become difficult to apply in some situations. The ILO has noted that digital platforms can blur the traditional distinction between employees and self-employed workers and may raise questions concerning wages, social protection, paid leave and collective bargaining.

The European Union's Platform Work Directive, 2024/2831, similarly recognises the diversity of platform work and defines platform work as work organised through a digital labour platform, irrespective of whether the work is performed online or at a particular location.

3.4 Gig Work and Platform Workers under Indian Law

The distinction between gig work and platform work is particularly important in the Indian legal context. The Code on Social Security, 2020 expressly recognises both the concepts of a "gig

worker" and a "platform worker". A gig worker is generally understood as a person who performs work or participates in a work arrangement and earns from such activities outside the traditional employer-employee relationship. A platform worker refers to a person engaged in a work arrangement outside the traditional employer-employee relationship where an online platform connects the worker with organisations or individuals for specific services.

The statutory recognition of these categories represents an important development because it acknowledges forms of work that do not fit neatly within the conventional employer-employee relationship. At the same time, the classification raises an important question: whether statutory recognition of gig and platform workers is sufficient to provide them with protections traditionally associated with employment.

The Code on Social Security, 2020 provides for social-security schemes for unorganised workers, gig workers and platform workers. It therefore attempts to extend a degree of social-security protection to emerging categories of workers. However, the effectiveness of such protection depends not merely upon statutory recognition but also upon the implementation, coverage and accessibility of the relevant schemes.

3.5 Algorithmic Management

One of the most important features connecting AI, automation and platform work is algorithmic management. The ILO describes algorithmic management as the use of algorithmic systems and data to organise, assign, monitor, supervise and evaluate work. Such systems may use AI, but algorithmic management can also operate through relatively simple rules-based systems.

Algorithmic management can influence several aspects of the employment relationship. For example, an algorithm may allocate tasks, determine work schedules, calculate performance indicators, recommend or determine remuneration, evaluate workers through ratings, or contribute to decisions concerning suspension or termination of access to a platform. Consequently, the algorithm may perform functions traditionally

associated with human management.

This development creates a significant challenge for labour law because workers may not always know how decisions affecting their work are made. The problem is not limited to the accuracy of an algorithm; it also concerns transparency, explainability, accountability, discrimination, privacy and the possibility of human review.

The EU Platform Work Directive specifically recognises automated monitoring systems and automated decision-making systems and addresses their use in relation to matters such as work assignments, earnings, working time, safety and health, training and contractual status.

3.6 Relationship Between AI, Automation and Platform Work

Although AI, automation and platform work are closely connected, they are not interchangeable concepts. AI primarily concerns technological systems capable of generating predictions, recommendations or decisions; automation concerns the technological performance of tasks or processes with reduced human intervention; and platform work concerns a particular organisational model through which work is arranged and performed using digital platforms.

The concepts overlap when digital platforms use automated or AI-based systems to manage workers. In such circumstances, the platform becomes not merely a digital intermediary but also a technological mechanism through which managerial functions may be exercised. The ILO has observed that algorithmic management is a defining feature of digital labour platforms and can affect the organisation of work, access to assignments, earnings and working conditions.

This conceptual relationship is central to the present study. The major labour-law question is no longer confined to whether technology replaces human labour. It also concerns how technological systems exercise control over human labour and whether existing legal categories are capable of recognising and regulating that control. This question provides the basis for examining the impact of AI and automation on employment and the specific legal

challenges arising from platform work.

4. Impact Of Ai And Automation On Employment

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and automation into the workplace is transforming the nature, organisation and conditions of employment. The impact of these technologies cannot be understood merely in terms of whether machines will replace human workers. AI may eliminate certain tasks, modify existing occupations, create new forms of employment and change the manner in which workers are supervised and evaluated. Recent research by the International Labour Organization (ILO) indicates that the principal effect of generative AI is likely to be the transformation of jobs rather than their complete replacement. Its 2025 assessment found that approximately one in four workers globally are in occupations with some degree of exposure to generative AI.

4.1 Job Displacement and Transformation

One of the most significant concerns surrounding AI and automation is the possibility of job displacement. Automation can perform repetitive, predictable and data-intensive tasks with limited human intervention. AI can further extend this capacity to certain cognitive and administrative tasks. Consequently, occupations involving routine data processing, clerical activities, customer support and other highly standardised tasks may experience substantial technological transformation.

However, job displacement should not be equated with the disappearance of entire occupations. An occupation normally consists of several different tasks, and technology may automate only some of them. The ILO's 2025 global assessment consequently emphasises job transformation rather than widespread replacement.

This distinction is important from a labour-law perspective. If technology changes the tasks performed by workers rather than eliminating the entire occupation, the legal response should not be restricted to termination and compensation. It should also address reskilling, retraining, redeployment and protection during periods of

occupational transition.

4.2 Creation of New Employment Opportunities

AI and automation can also create new employment opportunities. The development, deployment and maintenance of AI systems require workers with skills in areas such as data science, software development, cybersecurity, AI governance and digital technologies. In addition, technological transformation may generate new occupations that did not previously exist.

The ILO has recognised that AI may both eliminate existing jobs and create new ones, while stressing that the manner in which technological change is managed will influence its consequences for workers.

The creation of new employment, however, does not automatically compensate workers who lose existing employment. New jobs may require qualifications or technical skills that displaced workers do not possess. Therefore, the transition from traditional employment to technologically enabled employment requires appropriate policies concerning skill development, vocational training, lifelong learning and social protection.

4.3 Changes in Skills and the Nature of Work

AI is also changing the skills required in the labour market. Workers increasingly need not only technical knowledge but also digital literacy, analytical abilities, adaptability and the capacity to work with AI-based systems. The ILO has emphasised the importance of equipping workers with appropriate skills as AI transforms occupations.

The changing skill requirements create a potential divide between workers who can effectively use new technologies and those who cannot. Workers with limited access to digital infrastructure, education and training may face greater difficulty adapting to technological change. Therefore, the benefits of AI may not be distributed equally across workers, sectors or countries.

From a labour-law perspective, this raises questions about the responsibility of employers

and the State in facilitating worker adaptation. A human-centred approach to technological transformation requires that productivity gains should be accompanied by measures enabling workers to participate meaningfully in the changing labour market.

4.4 AI in Recruitment and Employment Decisions

AI is increasingly capable of assisting employers in recruitment and human-resource management. Automated systems may be used to screen applications, identify candidates, assess qualifications and analyse information relating to prospective employees.

The use of AI in recruitment may increase efficiency and reduce administrative burdens. At the same time, automated decision-making may reproduce or amplify biases contained in training data or in the design of the system. A worker or applicant may also find it difficult to understand why a particular decision was made when the process involves complex technological systems.

This creates important legal concerns relating to equality, non-discrimination, transparency, accountability and privacy. The use of technology in employment decisions therefore cannot be treated as merely a technical matter. Where an automated system influences access to employment, labour law must ensure that technological efficiency does not undermine fundamental principles of fair treatment.

4.5 Algorithmic Supervision and Workplace Control

The impact of AI extends beyond recruitment. Employers and digital platforms can use algorithmic systems to allocate tasks, monitor performance, assess productivity and influence working arrangements. The OECD's 2025 research describes algorithmic management as software that automates or supports managerial functions and reports that such systems are already widely used in the countries covered by its survey. The study also identifies concerns relating to accountability, transparency and worker health.

Algorithmic supervision can therefore change the

traditional employer-worker relationship. Instead of receiving instructions directly from a human manager, workers may receive instructions through an application or digital system. Their performance may be measured through ratings, response times, acceptance rates, productivity indicators or other forms of digitally collected data.

Such systems may increase efficiency but can also intensify workplace control. The ILO has identified changes in work intensity and worker autonomy as important consequences of the introduction of generative AI and algorithmic systems.

4.6 Impact on Working Conditions

The consequences of AI must also be examined from the perspective of job quality. Technological systems may reduce certain forms of physical or repetitive work and improve productivity. However, they may simultaneously increase work intensity, surveillance and pressure to meet digitally determined targets.

For example, workers managed through digital platforms may be continuously evaluated through ratings and performance data. Similarly, employees in conventional workplaces may be monitored through productivity software and automated performance-management systems.

The central issue is therefore not simply whether technology increases productivity but under what conditions productivity is achieved. Labour law has traditionally addressed working hours, wages, occupational safety, rest periods and other conditions of work. The development of AI requires these protections to be reconsidered in technologically mediated workplaces.

4.7 Gender and Unequal Effects of AI

The impact of AI is not necessarily uniform across different groups of workers. Occupational structures can determine the extent to which particular groups are exposed to technological transformation. The ILO's 2026 research indicates that female-dominated occupations have higher exposure to generative AI than male-dominated occupations, partly because

women are more concentrated in clerical, administrative and business-support occupations.

This demonstrates that technological transformation can interact with existing inequalities in the labour market. If certain groups are concentrated in occupations that are more exposed to automation, they may face greater risks during periods of technological restructuring. Conversely, under-representation in emerging AI-related occupations may limit their access to newly created employment opportunities.

Therefore, technological transition should also be examined through the principles of equality, non-discrimination and inclusive employment.

4.8 AI and the Changing Employer-Worker Relationship

Perhaps the most significant consequence of AI and automation is the transformation of the traditional employer-worker relationship. Conventional labour law generally assumes identifiable parties: an employer exercises managerial authority and a worker performs work in return for remuneration. AI-enabled workplaces can distribute managerial functions between human decision-makers and technological systems.

This transformation is particularly visible in platform work. A digital platform may determine how work is allocated, calculate remuneration, monitor performance and restrict access to the platform. The legal question then becomes whether the formal contractual description of the relationship adequately reflects the actual degree of control exercised over the worker.

The emergence of algorithmic management therefore requires labour law to look beyond formal contractual labels and examine the actual organisation and control of work. This issue becomes especially important where workers are classified as independent contractors or gig workers despite being subject to significant technological control.

4.9 Implications for Labour Law

The impact of AI and automation demonstrates that the future of labour law cannot be confined

to the traditional question of job protection. It must also address the quality and organisation of technologically transformed work. Four broad legal concerns emerge:

- Employment security – protection against unjustified displacement and unfair termination;
- Fair transition – access to reskilling, retraining and redeployment;
- Protection against technological risks – transparency, privacy, non-discrimination and accountability in automated decision-making;
- Social protection – ensuring that workers in non-traditional employment arrangements are not excluded from social-security protection.

The ILO's recent research similarly emphasises that the effects of AI will depend significantly on how technological transformation is managed and that social dialogue, worker participation, skills development and adequate social protection are important elements of a fair transition.

Thus, AI and automation should not be viewed exclusively as threats to employment. They represent a broader transformation of work that creates both opportunities and risks. The central challenge for labour law is to ensure that technological progress remains compatible with decent work, equality, worker dignity and social protection. This provides the basis for examining the specific labour-law challenges associated with automation and platform work in the next section.

5. LABOUR LAW CHALLENGES IN AUTOMATION AND PLATFORM WORK

The transformation of work through artificial intelligence, automation and digital platforms has created several challenges for traditional labour-law frameworks. Labour law has historically been designed around relatively identifiable concepts such as the employer, employee, workplace, working time and remuneration. AI-enabled workplaces and platform-based work can make

these relationships more complex. Workers may be formally classified as independent contractors while their work is substantially organised and controlled through digital systems. Similarly, important managerial functions may be performed by algorithms rather than directly by human managers. The principal labour-law challenge is therefore to ensure that technological innovation does not create a gap between the reality of work and the protection available under law.

5.1 Classification of Workers and the Employer-Employee Relationship

The first major challenge concerns the legal classification of workers. Traditional labour legislation generally distinguishes between employees and independent contractors. Employees normally receive a wider range of statutory protections, whereas independent contractors are generally governed by contractual principles.

Platform work complicates this distinction because a worker may have considerable flexibility regarding when and where to work while simultaneously being subject to significant technological control. Digital platforms may allocate tasks, determine or influence remuneration, monitor performance, use customer ratings and restrict access to the platform.

The International Labour Organization has identified worker classification as one of the central regulatory issues arising from platform work. Its research indicates that platform business models can create a workforce situated outside conventional employment relationships and can shift certain business costs and risks onto workers.

Indian law has responded to this development through the Code on Social Security, 2020, which expressly recognises “gig workers” and “platform workers”. This recognition is significant because it acknowledges categories of workers operating outside the traditional employer-employee relationship. However, statutory recognition as a gig or platform worker does not necessarily resolve the broader question of whether a particular relationship should legally be treated as employment.

The comparative approach adopted by the European Union is particularly relevant. Article 4 of Directive (EU) 2024/2831 requires the determination of employment status to be based primarily on the actual performance of work, including the use of automated monitoring and decision-making systems, irrespective of the contractual label adopted by the parties.

Thus, the future of labour law may require greater emphasis on the actual degree of control, direction, economic dependence and organisation of work, rather than relying exclusively upon contractual terminology.

5.2 Job Security and Technological Displacement

Automation creates another major challenge concerning job security. AI systems may perform tasks previously undertaken by human workers, while automated production systems can reduce the demand for certain forms of routine labour. At the same time, technological change can create new occupations and transform existing ones.

The legal challenge arises when technological restructuring results in redundancy, termination or significant alteration of employment. Traditional labour law provides various protections relating to termination, retrenchment and compensation, but the development of AI raises an additional question: what responsibilities should employers have towards workers whose jobs are substantially transformed by technological change?

A future-oriented labour framework may therefore need to give greater attention to reskilling, retraining and redeployment. The objective should not necessarily be to prevent technological innovation but to ensure that workers are not left without meaningful protection during technological transitions.

5.3 Algorithmic Management and Transparency

Algorithmic management represents a particularly important challenge because algorithms can perform functions traditionally

associated with managers. The ILO defines algorithmic management as the use of algorithmic systems and tracked data to organise, assign, monitor, supervise and evaluate work. It is particularly prominent in digital labour platforms.

This raises questions concerning transparency and accountability. A worker may receive a low rating, lose access to assignments or have an account suspended without understanding the precise factors responsible for the decision. If the decision is generated by an automated system, conventional mechanisms of managerial accountability may become difficult to apply.

The ILO's 2026 Decent Work in the Platform Economy Convention (No. 193) represents a significant international development in this regard. The Convention requires measures concerning the use of automated systems and provides for information regarding their impact on working conditions and access to work. It also contemplates explanations and review of significant adverse automated decisions, including suspension, deactivation or termination.

This development indicates an emerging principle that technological management should remain subject to human accountability and meaningful worker oversight.

5.4 Wages, Remuneration and Working Time

AI and platform-based work also challenge traditional concepts of wages and working time. Platform workers may be paid according to tasks, trips, deliveries, projects or other units rather than receiving a conventional periodic wage. In some cases, workers may also bear expenses relating to vehicles, equipment, internet connectivity or other resources required to perform the work.

The ILO's research on digital labour platforms has identified concerns relating to remuneration, work availability, work intensity, social protection and work-life balance.

Algorithmic systems can further influence the economic value of work by determining task allocation, incentives, pricing or performance-related payments. Consequently, the question of fair remuneration may increasingly involve

examining not only the amount paid but also how technological systems determine access to paid work and calculate earnings.

Working time presents a related difficulty. A platform worker may technically have the freedom to log into an application at any time but may nevertheless work for long periods because of economic necessity or platform incentives. Therefore, formal flexibility does not necessarily mean genuine control over working time.

5.5 Social Security and the Protection Gap

Social security is another central challenge. Traditional social-security systems are often connected to stable employment relationships and identifiable employers. Platform workers and other non-standard workers may have fragmented or irregular earnings and may work simultaneously through several platforms.

India's Code on Social Security, 2020 expressly provides for social-security schemes for unorganised workers, gig workers and platform workers. This represents an important statutory recognition of the need to extend social protection beyond conventional employment.

The challenge, however, lies in ensuring effective coverage and implementation. A legal entitlement or statutory framework does not automatically guarantee that every worker will receive meaningful protection. Registration, identification of workers, contribution mechanisms, portability of benefits and awareness of available schemes are important practical considerations.

The ILO's newly adopted Convention No. 193 similarly recognises social security as a distinct component of decent work in the platform economy. Article 12 requires measures to ensure that digital platform workers have access to social-security protection on terms no less favourable than those applicable to other workers with the same employment status.

For India, this raises an important policy question concerning how social-security benefits can remain portable when workers move

between employers, platforms, occupations and geographical locations.

5.6 Privacy and Data Protection

AI-enabled workplaces depend heavily on the collection and processing of worker data. Employers and platforms may collect information concerning productivity, location, working patterns, communication, performance and behaviour. Such data can be processed to evaluate workers or make decisions concerning their employment.

This creates a tension between legitimate managerial interests and workers' privacy. Excessive surveillance may affect worker autonomy and dignity, while insufficient transparency may prevent workers from knowing what information is being collected and how it is being used.

The issue is particularly important in platform work because digital platforms can continuously generate data through applications and connected devices. Labour law therefore increasingly intersects with data-protection law.

The ILO's Convention No. 193 expressly addresses data protection and privacy in the platform economy, demonstrating that worker data has become an important component of contemporary labour protection.

5.7 Discrimination and Bias in Automated Decision-Making

AI systems may influence recruitment, promotion, remuneration, task allocation and termination. If the data used to train or operate these systems contains historical biases, automated decision-making may reproduce existing inequalities.

This creates an important challenge for equality and non-discrimination principles. A discriminatory decision does not necessarily become legally or ethically acceptable merely because it has been generated by an algorithm.

The problem can be particularly difficult where the worker cannot understand the factors influencing the automated decision. Effective legal protection therefore requires mechanisms for

transparency, explanation, human review and access to remedies.

The ILO's Convention No. 193 expressly includes the elimination of discrimination in employment and occupation among the fundamental principles and rights applicable in the platform economy.

5.8 Occupational Safety, Health and Well-being

Technological transformation also affects occupational safety and health. Automation may reduce exposure to some physical risks but introduce new risks associated with work intensity, surveillance, stress and constant digital monitoring.

Platform workers may additionally face physical risks associated with transportation, delivery and other location-based services. The ILO has reported concerns relating to work-related injuries, stress, long working hours and inadequate work-related protection among platform workers.

The legal framework must therefore recognise that occupational safety in the digital economy includes both physical and psychosocial dimensions.

The 2026 ILO Convention No. 193 expressly requires measures concerning occupational accidents, occupational diseases and other injuries to the health of digital platform workers. It also recognises protection against violence and harassment in the world of work, including online forms of such conduct.

5.9 Collective Bargaining and Freedom of Association

Another challenge concerns collective representation. Traditional collective bargaining is generally structured around identifiable employers and groups of employees. Platform workers, freelancers and other non-standard workers may work individually, across multiple platforms or without a conventional workplace.

This can make collective organisation more difficult. At the same time, workers may have

common interests concerning remuneration, working conditions, algorithmic decisions and social security.

The ILO's Convention No. 193 expressly recognises freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining as fundamental principles applicable in the platform economy.

The future legal framework should therefore consider how workers can exercise collective rights even where their work is mediated through digital platforms rather than a conventional workplace.

5.10 Access to Remedies and Accountability

A labour-right is meaningful only when an effective remedy is available for its violation. AI and platform work can complicate access to remedies because workers may not know which entity is legally responsible for a particular decision.

For example, if an automated system suspends a worker's account, several questions may arise: Who made the decision? Which entity is responsible? Can the worker obtain an explanation? Can the decision be reviewed by a human? What forum has jurisdiction over the dispute?

The emerging international framework increasingly recognises these concerns. Convention No. 193 requires measures ensuring access to fair and effective dispute-resolution mechanisms and appropriate remedies for digital platform workers.

Accordingly, accountability must remain a central principle of AI-enabled labour regulation. Technological complexity should not result in the absence of a legally identifiable responsible party.

5.11 The Emerging Regulatory Gap

The challenges discussed above demonstrate the existence of a potential gap between technological development and traditional labour-law categories. The problem is not necessarily that labour law has become irrelevant; rather, existing principles must be adapted to new forms of work.

The ILO's 2026 Convention No. 193 is an important development because it establishes the first international labour standard specifically dedicated to the platform economy and addresses classification, social security, automated systems, data protection, occupational safety, remuneration and access to justice.

Similarly, the EU Platform Work Directive demonstrates a regulatory approach that considers actual working conditions and technological control when determining employment status.

For India, the recognition of gig and platform workers under the Code on Social Security, 2020 provides a statutory foundation, but the continuing development of AI-driven work requires the legal framework to address algorithmic management, transparency, worker data, human review and effective remedies more comprehensively.

5.12 Concluding Observation

The labour-law challenges created by AI, automation and platform work demonstrate that the future of work cannot be regulated solely through traditional categories of employee and employer. The central legal concern is to ensure that the technological organisation of work does not undermine fundamental labour rights.

The appropriate regulatory approach should therefore combine employment protection, social security, fair remuneration, transparency in automated decision-making, data protection, occupational safety, collective rights and effective remedies. The objective should not be to prevent technological innovation but to ensure that innovation develops within a framework of decent work and human dignity.

These challenges provide the basis for examining whether existing Indian labour laws are adequate to respond to the changing nature of work and how Indian law compares with emerging international regulatory approaches.

6. Existing Legal Framework: Indian And International Perspectives

The transformation of employment through artificial intelligence, automation and platform work has created the need to examine whether existing legal frameworks are capable of protecting workers in technologically changing workplaces. In India, the legal framework has traditionally been based on the Constitution and labour legislation governing wages, social security, industrial relations, occupational safety and employment conditions. The emergence of gig and platform work has, however, required the law to recognise forms of work that do not fit neatly within the traditional employer-employee relationship. At the international level, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the European Union have developed important frameworks addressing the changing nature of work, particularly platform work and algorithmic management.

6.1 Constitutional Framework in India

The Constitution of India provides the fundamental foundation for regulating labour and promoting social and economic justice. Although the Constitution does not contain a specific provision dealing with artificial intelligence or platform work, several constitutional principles are relevant to technologically transformed employment.

Article 14 guarantees equality before the law and equal protection of the laws. This principle is relevant where AI-based systems are used for recruitment, promotion, remuneration, performance evaluation or termination because automated systems should not result in arbitrary or discriminatory treatment.

Article 19(1)(c) guarantees the right to form associations or unions. This provision assumes importance in the platform economy, where workers may seek collective representation despite working through different platforms or without a conventional workplace.

Article 21, through its broad interpretation by the Supreme Court, provides the constitutional foundation for dignity, privacy and various aspects

of a meaningful life. The increasing use of workplace surveillance and collection of employee data therefore raises questions concerning privacy and dignity.

The Directive Principles of State Policy also provide important guidance. Articles 38, 39, 41, 42 and 43 emphasise social justice, adequate means of livelihood, just and humane conditions of work, public assistance and a living wage and decent conditions of work. These constitutional objectives are relevant to the development of a human-centred framework for AI and automation.

Accordingly, the constitutional framework does not prevent technological innovation. Rather, it provides principles within which technological development and employment practices should operate.

6.2 The Four Labour Codes and Technological Change

India's labour-law framework has undergone significant restructuring through four Labour Codes:

1. Code on Wages, 2019;
2. Industrial Relations Code, 2020;
3. Code on Social Security, 2020; and
4. Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020.

These Codes seek to consolidate and rationalise numerous central labour enactments. Their relevance to AI and platform work differs according to the subject matter of each Code.

The Code on Wages, 2019 is relevant to minimum wages and payment of wages. Its principles become important where technology changes the manner in which workers are remunerated.

The Industrial Relations Code, 2020 concerns trade unions, conditions of employment and industrial disputes. It therefore remains relevant to collective representation and disputes arising from technological restructuring.

The Code on Social Security, 2020 is particularly significant because it expressly recognises gig

workers and platform workers and provides a framework for their social-security protection.

The Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020 addresses occupational safety and working conditions. Its principles are relevant to workplaces in which technology changes occupational risks and working methods.

For the purposes of the present study, the Code on Social Security, 2020 is particularly important because it is the principal Indian labour legislation to expressly incorporate gig and platform workers into the statutory social-security framework.

6.3 Code on Social Security, 2020

The Code on Social Security, 2020 represents a significant development in Indian labour law because it expressly recognises emerging forms of work. Section 2 provides statutory definitions of “gig worker” and “platform worker”, thereby acknowledging work arrangements outside the traditional employer-employee relationship.

The Code also provides for registration of unorganised workers, gig workers and platform workers. Section 113 provides a framework for registration and eligibility to receive benefits under the relevant schemes.

More importantly, Section 114 empowers the Central Government to frame social-security schemes for gig workers and platform workers. The provision specifically identifies areas including life and disability cover, accident insurance, health and maternity benefits, old-age protection and crèche facilities.

The Code also provides for the participation of aggregators in financing social-security schemes. Section 114(4) provides a statutory framework for aggregator contributions, subject to the limits specified in the provision. The Seventh Schedule identifies categories including ride-sharing services, food and grocery delivery services, logistics, e-marketplaces, professional services, healthcare, travel and hospitality and content and media services.

Section 141 further provides for a Social Security Fund for the social security and welfare of unorganised workers, gig workers and platform

workers.

The importance of the Code lies in its attempt to move social-security protection beyond conventional employment. Nevertheless, the Code's approach is principally directed towards social security and does not, by itself, resolve every question concerning employment status, algorithmic management, automated decision-making, workplace surveillance or collective bargaining.

6.4 Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023

AI-enabled employment increasingly involves the collection and processing of personal data. Recruitment systems, workplace monitoring tools and digital platforms may process information relating to workers and applicants.

The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 establishes a statutory framework concerning the processing of digital personal data and recognises the right of individuals to protect their personal data while also permitting lawful processing. The Act defines concepts such as “automated”, “Data Principal” and “Data Fiduciary”.

This legislation is therefore relevant to AI-enabled workplaces, although it is not a labour-specific statute. Its interaction with labour law becomes important when employers or platforms use automated systems to collect and process worker information.

A comprehensive regulatory approach should consequently consider labour rights and data-protection rights together, particularly where workplace surveillance, profiling and automated decision-making are involved.

6.5 International Labour Organization Framework

The ILO has played an important role in developing the concept of a human-centred future of work. Its work on digital labour platforms has highlighted both the opportunities created by digitalisation and the decent-work deficits that may arise from new forms of employment. The ILO identifies issues including

employment status, remuneration, working conditions, social protection and collective representation as important aspects of platform work.

The adoption of Convention No. 193, the Decent Work in the Platform Economy Convention, 2026, represents a major development. The International Labour Conference adopted the Convention on 12 June 2026, making it the first international labour standard specifically dedicated to the platform economy.

The Convention applies to digital labour platforms and digital platform workers, subject to the provisions of the Convention. It addresses the platform economy from the perspective of decent work and recognises the need for appropriate protection regardless of whether platform work forms part of the formal or informal economy.

6.6 Employment Classification under ILO Convention No. 193

Employment classification is one of the central concerns addressed by the new Convention. Article 9 requires appropriate measures to ensure the correct classification of digital platform workers concerning the existence or non-existence of an employment relationship. The determination is to be guided mainly by facts relating to the performance of work and remuneration, while taking account of the specific characteristics of platform work.

This approach is significant because it moves the focus away from contractual labels and towards the actual circumstances in which work is performed.

For India, this principle has comparative importance. Although the Code on Social Security recognises gig and platform workers, the question of whether a particular worker should legally be regarded as an employee remains relevant for determining the full range of applicable labour rights.

6.7 Social Security under the International Framework

Convention No. 193 also recognises social security as an essential component of decent work in the

platform economy. Its approach reflects the principle that workers should not lose access to social protection merely because their work is organised through a digital platform.

This principle is particularly relevant to India because the Code on Social Security, 2020 already provides a statutory framework for social-security schemes for gig and platform workers. The international framework therefore provides a useful comparative benchmark for assessing the adequacy of India's approach.

The important issue is not merely whether workers are included within a statutory definition, but whether social-security benefits are accessible, portable, adequately funded and effectively implemented.

6.8 European Union Platform Work Directive, 2024

The European Union has adopted a specific legal framework for platform work through Directive (EU) 2024/2831 on improving working conditions in platform work.

The Directive recognises that digitalisation and algorithmic technologies can improve productivity and flexibility but may also create risks relating to surveillance, opacity, health and safety, equality and privacy.

One of its important features is the determination of correct employment status. Article 4 requires Member States to establish procedures for determining whether an employment relationship exists, based primarily on facts relating to the actual performance of work, including the use of automated monitoring and decision-making systems. The contractual label used by the parties is therefore not decisive.

The Directive also introduces a legal presumption of an employment relationship where facts indicating direction and control are established under applicable national law.

This represents an important regulatory approach because it recognises that technological control can be relevant to determining employment status.

6.9 Regulation of Algorithmic Management

The EU Directive goes beyond employment classification and establishes specific rules concerning algorithmic management. It defines automated monitoring systems and automated decision-making systems and recognises their potential influence over recruitment, work assignments, earnings, working time, safety and health, training and contractual status.

The Directive also imposes restrictions concerning certain forms of personal-data processing and requires human monitoring and review of significant decisions. It further provides for information and consultation concerning the introduction or substantial modification of automated monitoring and decision-making systems.

This is particularly relevant to the present research because it demonstrates a regulatory model in which algorithmic management itself becomes a subject of labour regulation, rather than being treated solely as a technological or data-protection issue.

6.10 Emerging Direction of Labour Law

The legal developments discussed above indicate a gradual movement from a traditional employment-centred model towards a broader work-centred regulatory approach. Under this approach, legal protection is increasingly concerned with the actual conditions under which work is performed rather than merely the formal contractual status of the worker.

For India, this does not necessarily require abandoning existing categories of employment. Rather, labour law may need to supplement those categories with additional safeguards for workers whose work is organised or controlled through digital technologies.

Three principles appear particularly relevant:

- First, technological neutrality: basic labour rights should not disappear merely because work is mediated through technology.
- Second, human accountability: important decisions affecting employment should remain

subject to meaningful human oversight and effective review.

- Third, social protection beyond traditional employment: workers should have access to appropriate social-security protection even where their work is fragmented, task-based or organised through multiple platforms.

These principles can contribute towards developing a labour-law framework capable of responding to technological change while maintaining the central objectives of decent work and worker protection.

7. Future Of Labour Law In The Age Of Ai

The transformation of work through artificial intelligence, automation and digital platforms requires labour law to adapt to changing forms of employment without losing sight of its fundamental purpose: the protection of human dignity, fairness and decent working conditions. The future of labour law should not be understood as a choice between technological innovation and worker protection. Rather, the central challenge is to develop a regulatory framework in which technological progress and labour rights can coexist.

The International Labour Organization has recently emphasised that the future of work will be shaped not by technology alone but by the policies, institutions and social dialogue through which technological change is governed. Its 2026 agenda identifies rights, employment and skills, social protection and social dialogue as central pillars of a human-centred approach to AI.

7.1 From Employment-Centred to Work-Centred Regulation

Traditional labour law has largely developed around the employer-employee relationship. However, platform work, freelancing, task-based work and AI-mediated employment demonstrate that work can increasingly exist outside conventional employment structures.

The future regulatory framework should therefore consider not only whether a person technically qualifies as an employee but also the actual conditions under which work is

performed. Factors such as economic dependence, technological control, remuneration, task allocation and performance monitoring may be relevant in determining the appropriate level of protection.

This does not necessarily require the abandonment of the employee category. Instead, labour law may need to develop additional protections for workers who fall between traditional categories.

The approach reflected in the ILO's Convention No. 193 (2026) is significant in this regard. Article 9 requires the classification of digital platform workers to be guided mainly by facts relating to the performance of work and remuneration, while taking account of the specific characteristics of platform work.

7.2 Human-Centred Regulation of AI

The future of labour law should place human beings at the centre of technological development. AI should be treated as a means of improving work and productivity rather than as a substitute for fundamental labour rights.

A human-centred approach requires technological deployment to be assessed according to its consequences for workers. Questions concerning job quality, dignity, autonomy, equality, health and social protection should therefore form part of decisions concerning workplace AI.

The ILO has expressly called for a human-centred approach to AI and has emphasised that the consequences of AI depend substantially upon how the technology is designed, deployed and governed.

Accordingly, future labour regulation should require employers and platforms to undertake appropriate assessments of the potential impact of significant AI systems on workers before and during their deployment.

7.3 Transparency and Explainability of Algorithmic Decisions

One of the most important reforms concerns algorithmic transparency. Workers should not be left without an explanation when an automated

system significantly affects their employment, remuneration, work allocation or access to a platform.

Future labour law should establish minimum requirements concerning:

- information about the use of AI and automated systems;
- the purposes for which such systems are used;
- significant factors influencing automated decisions;
- procedures for challenging automated decisions;
- access to meaningful human review; and
- preservation of appropriate records for accountability.

The emerging international framework supports this direction. ILO Convention No. 193 requires digital labour platforms to provide information regarding the use of automated systems for monitoring, evaluation and work-related decision-making.

Transparency should therefore become an important element of workplace fairness in the AI era.

7.4 Human Oversight and Right to Review

Automation should not eliminate human responsibility for important decisions affecting workers. Where AI systems contribute to decisions concerning recruitment, suspension, termination, remuneration or significant changes in working conditions, workers should have access to meaningful human review.

The purpose of human oversight is not necessarily to require a human to repeat every technological decision. Rather, it should ensure that workers have access to a responsible decision-maker capable of considering individual circumstances and correcting errors.

This principle is particularly important in platform work, where automated systems can influence access to work and income. The legal framework should therefore ensure that technological efficiency does not become a

barrier to justice.

7.5 Reskilling, Upskilling and Lifelong Learning

AI-driven transformation is likely to change the skills required across many occupations. The ILO's 2026 research identifies increasing demand for cognitive, socio-emotional, digital and AI-related skills and emphasises adaptability and human agency as important elements of the future workforce.

Labour law should therefore increasingly support lifelong learning. Workers whose jobs are transformed by automation should have opportunities to acquire new skills rather than being treated simply as displaced labour.

A future-oriented framework may require:

- employer-supported training;
- public investment in digital and AI skills;
- vocational education and reskilling programmes;
- recognition of skills acquired through informal and platform work; and
- special attention to workers who face greater barriers to digital participation.

Reskilling should consequently be viewed not merely as an economic policy but as an important component of a fair labour transition.

7.6 Strengthening Social Security

The transformation of employment makes social protection increasingly important. Workers may move between conventional employment, platform work, self-employment and periods of unemployment. A social-security system dependent exclusively upon a stable employer-worker relationship may therefore leave gaps in coverage.

India's Code on Social Security, 2020 has already recognised gig and platform workers within the statutory social-security framework. The future challenge is to ensure that benefits are accessible, portable and capable of following workers across different forms of employment.

The ILO's Convention No. 193 similarly requires measures to ensure social-security protection for digital platform workers on terms no less favourable than those applicable to other workers with the same employment status.

India could therefore consider strengthening mechanisms through which social-security benefits remain connected to the worker rather than exclusively to a particular employer or platform.

7.7 Protection of Worker Data and Privacy

The expansion of workplace AI will inevitably increase the importance of worker data. Employers and platforms may collect information relating to productivity, location, behaviour, communication and performance.

Future labour law should therefore establish clear boundaries concerning workplace surveillance and data processing. Workers should be informed about the collection and use of their data, and data collection should have a legitimate and proportionate purpose.

The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 provides an important general data-protection framework in India. However, the specific context of employment requires continuing consideration of how data-protection principles interact with managerial authority and workplace monitoring.

The future framework should particularly address excessive surveillance, automated profiling and the use of sensitive or unnecessary information in employment decisions.

7.8 Equality and Non-Discrimination in AI-Based Employment

AI systems may reproduce existing social and economic inequalities if they are trained on biased or incomplete data. Therefore, the principle of equality must remain applicable when employment decisions are automated.

Future labour regulation should require appropriate safeguards against discrimination in:

- recruitment;

- promotion;
- remuneration;
- task allocation;
- performance assessment;
- access to training; and
- termination or deactivation.

The responsibility should not be shifted entirely to individual workers. Employers and platforms using high-impact AI systems should bear appropriate responsibility for identifying and addressing discriminatory outcomes.

This is particularly important in developing economies where existing inequalities may interact with technological inequality.

7.9 Strengthening Collective Bargaining and Social Dialogue

The future of labour law should not be designed solely through legislation and technology. Workers and their representatives should participate in decisions concerning technological transformation.

The ILO has emphasised the importance of social dialogue in shaping the introduction and use of AI in workplaces. Recent ILO research examining experiences across several regions shows that worker representatives have participated in discussions concerning employment effects, algorithmic management, skills and working conditions.

Collective bargaining can therefore become an important mechanism for regulating workplace AI. Agreements between employers and workers could address matters such as:

- introduction of AI systems;
- worker consultation;
- monitoring and surveillance;
- training and reskilling;
- job displacement;
- data protection;

- algorithmic decision-making; and
- procedures for reviewing technological decisions.

This approach can make labour regulation more responsive to technological developments than legislation alone.

7.10 Portable and Universal Social Protection

Platform workers may work for several platforms simultaneously and may frequently move between different occupations. Consequently, social protection should ideally be portable.

A worker should not lose accumulated social-security protection merely because they change employers, platforms or employment status. Portable benefits can be particularly important for workers whose income is fragmented across multiple sources.

For India, digital infrastructure can potentially assist in linking workers with social-security systems. Existing initiatives for registering informal workers provide a foundation upon which more integrated systems could be developed.

The objective should be to create a social-protection system capable of following the worker across the changing labour market.

7.11 Regulation of Platform Accountability

Digital platforms should not be treated merely as technological intermediaries where they exercise significant control over working conditions. Where platforms determine or substantially influence work allocation, remuneration, performance evaluation or access to work, appropriate responsibilities should accompany that control.

The ILO's Convention No. 193 recognises specific responsibilities of digital labour platforms concerning occupational safety, remuneration information, social security and automated systems.

For India, future legislation could therefore consider establishing clearer responsibilities for

platforms concerning:

- disclosure of terms and conditions;
- payment and deductions;
- worker registration;
- social-security contributions;
- algorithmic decision-making;
- grievance mechanisms;
- occupational safety; and
- data protection.

7.12 A New Approach to Job Displacement

Labour law should also reconsider how technological displacement is addressed. Traditional approaches often focus on what happens after a worker loses employment. A future-oriented approach should also focus on what happens before and during technological restructuring.

Where significant automation is proposed, employers could be encouraged or required, depending on the circumstances, to consider:

1. whether workers can be redeployed;
2. whether training can enable workers to undertake new roles;
3. whether technological implementation can be phased;
4. whether workers and their representatives have been consulted; and
5. what social-protection measures will apply to affected workers.

Such an approach would shift labour law from a predominantly reactive model towards a preventive and transitional model.

7.13 Inclusive AI and the Digital Divide

The benefits of AI are unlikely to be distributed equally if workers lack access to digital infrastructure, education and training. The digital divide may therefore become a labour-law concern because unequal technological access can translate into unequal employment opportunities.

This is particularly important for developing countries such as India, where substantial parts of the workforce remain in informal and low-skilled employment.

Recent ILO discussions on AI and Asian labour markets have emphasised the need for inclusive policies, reskilling and attention to digital inequalities so that workers are not left behind by technological transformation.

A future labour framework should therefore combine technological development with investment in education, digital infrastructure, skills and social protection.

7.14 Strengthening Remedies and Institutional Capacity

Rights relating to AI and platform work will have limited value unless workers can effectively enforce them. Future labour regulation should therefore provide accessible grievance and dispute-resolution mechanisms.

Workers should be able to challenge:

- unlawful termination or deactivation;
- discriminatory automated decisions;
- non-payment or underpayment;
- improper deductions;
- excessive surveillance;
- unsafe working conditions; and
- violations of social-security rights.

Institutional capacity is equally important. Labour authorities may require technological expertise to investigate disputes involving algorithms and automated systems. Courts, tribunals and labour authorities may increasingly need access to technical expertise where disputes involve complex AI systems.

7.15 Towards a Human-Centred Labour Law Model

The future of labour law should therefore be based on a human-centred regulatory model. Such a model would not reject AI or automation. Instead, it would ensure that technological

innovation operates within a framework of labour rights and social justice.

The proposed model may be understood through six interconnected principles:

PRINCIPLE	MAIN OBJECTIVES
Human Dignity	Technology should not undermine the dignity and autonomy of workers
Fairness	AI-based employment decisions should be transparent and non-discriminatory
Accountability	A responsible human or legal entity should remain identifiable
Social protection	Workers should have access to appropriate social-security protection
Participation	Workers should have a meaningful voice in technological change
Adaptability	Labour law should evolve with changing forms of work

These principles are consistent with the broader ILO human-centred approach, which places rights, employment and skills, social protection and social dialogue at the centre of the AI transition.

7.16 The Indian Context: Towards Labour Law Reform

For India, the future of labour regulation should build upon the existing Labour Codes rather than treating technological work as an entirely separate legal field. The recognition of gig and platform workers under the Code on Social Security, 2020 provides a starting point. However, the development of AI and algorithmic management suggests the need for additional regulatory attention to automated decision-making, worker data, human oversight and platform accountability.

India could consider developing a dedicated framework or detailed rules addressing AI in employment and algorithmic management. Such a framework could establish minimum standards for transparency, worker consultation, data protection, human review, discrimination prevention and accountability.

The regulatory approach should also remain flexible because AI technologies are developing rapidly. Excessively rigid rules may become outdated, whereas principles-based regulation can provide greater adaptability.

7.17 Future Direction

The future of labour law should consequently be understood as a process of adaptation rather than replacement. AI and automation will continue to change occupations, employment relationships and methods of management. The role of labour law is to ensure that these changes occur within a framework that protects workers while permitting technological innovation.

The central principle should be that technological change may transform the way work is performed, but it should not remove the fundamental rights associated with work.

The adoption of ILO Convention No. 193 in 2026 reinforces this emerging direction by placing decent work, social protection, employment classification, occupational safety and algorithmic systems within a common international framework for the platform economy.

Accordingly, the future of labour law lies not in resisting technological change but in governing it through human-centred principles, effective institutions and meaningful worker participation. This approach can help ensure that AI becomes a tool for improving productivity and working conditions rather than a mechanism through which existing labour protections are weakened.

8. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The doctrinal and comparative analysis undertaken in this study leads to the following major findings:

8.1. AI is transforming the nature of work rather than simply replacing human labour

The study finds that the impact of AI and automation extends beyond the displacement of workers. AI is transforming existing occupations, redistributing tasks between humans and machines, creating new forms of employment

and changing the skills required in the labour market. Therefore, the future of work should be examined in terms of job transformation as well as job displacement.

8.2. Traditional labour-law categories are facing increasing pressure

The study finds that the traditional distinction between employee and independent contractor becomes increasingly difficult to apply in some platform-based work arrangements. Digital platforms may exercise substantial control through task allocation, ratings, remuneration mechanisms and automated monitoring even where workers are formally described as independent contractors.

Consequently, the actual nature and degree of control exercised over work should receive greater legal attention.

8.3. Algorithmic management is creating a new form of workplace control

The study finds that algorithms can perform functions traditionally exercised by human managers, including allocating work, monitoring performance, evaluating workers and influencing access to employment. This creates new questions concerning transparency, accountability, discrimination and human oversight.

The emergence of algorithmic management therefore requires labour law to move beyond traditional forms of managerial regulation.

8.4. India's legal framework has recognised emerging forms of work, but important regulatory questions remain

The Code on Social Security, 2020 represents a significant development because it expressly recognises gig workers and platform workers and provides a framework for their social-security protection. The Code has been in force since 21 November 2025.

However, the study finds that statutory recognition does not, by itself, resolve questions relating to employment status, algorithmic decision-making, worker surveillance, data protection, collective representation and effective remedies.

8.5. Social security is central to protecting platform workers

The study finds that fragmented and non-traditional employment can create gaps in social-security protection. Platform workers may move between different platforms, employers and forms of work, making portability of social-security benefits particularly important.

India's existing framework provides a statutory basis for extending social security to gig and platform workers, while the Government has also emphasised portability of benefits across employments and States.

8.6. Worker data and privacy have become important labour-law concerns

The study finds that AI-enabled employment increasingly depends upon the collection and processing of worker data. Recruitment systems, workplace monitoring and platform applications may generate extensive information about workers.

Consequently, privacy and data protection can no longer be treated as matters separate from labour law. The regulation of workplace AI requires consideration of the relationship between data protection, managerial authority and worker dignity.

8.7. AI may reproduce existing forms of discrimination

The study finds that automated employment decisions can potentially reproduce biases contained in training data, historical employment practices or system design. This creates risks in recruitment, promotion, remuneration, task allocation and termination.

The use of an algorithm does not eliminate the responsibility associated with the consequences of an employment decision. Accordingly, principles of equality and non-discrimination must continue to apply to AI-assisted employment decisions.

8.8. Human oversight is necessary for significant employment decisions

The study finds that workers should have access to meaningful human review where automated systems significantly affect their employment or livelihood. Decisions concerning recruitment, suspension, deactivation, remuneration or termination should not become effectively unchallengeable merely because technology has been used in making them.

Human accountability is therefore an essential principle for the future regulation of AI-enabled work.

8.9. Reskilling and lifelong learning are essential responses to automation

The study finds that technological transformation requires greater emphasis on reskilling, upskilling and lifelong learning. Protecting workers from technological displacement cannot depend exclusively upon preventing automation. Workers must also be provided opportunities to adapt to changing occupational requirements.

Accordingly, responsibility for technological transition should be shared among the State, employers, educational institutions and other relevant stakeholders.

8.10. Collective representation remains relevant in the platform economy

The study finds that technological transformation does not eliminate the need for collective worker representation. Platform workers may have common concerns regarding remuneration, working conditions, algorithmic management, social security and occupational safety even when they do not share a conventional workplace.

Consequently, labour regulation should facilitate appropriate forms of collective representation and social dialogue in technologically mediated work.

8.11. International labour standards are moving towards specific regulation of platform work

The study finds that international labour regulation is increasingly responding specifically to the platform economy. The ILO adopted Convention No. 193, the Decent Work in the Platform Economy Convention, 2026, on 12 June

2026. It is the first ILO Convention specifically dedicated to the platform economy and addresses issues including employment classification, social protection, automated systems and decent working conditions.

However, as of September 2026, the Convention has zero ratifications and is therefore not yet in force. Its present significance for this study is consequently as an emerging international labour standard and comparative normative framework rather than as a binding obligation upon India.

8.12. A gap exists between technological development and labour-law regulation

The overall finding of the study is that the principal challenge is not the existence of AI or automation itself but the regulatory gap between technological control and existing labour-law concepts.

Indian labour law has taken important steps towards recognising new forms of work, particularly through the Code on Social Security, 2020. Nevertheless, a more comprehensive framework is required to address algorithmic management, automated employment decisions, worker data, human oversight, platform accountability and effective remedies.

8.13. A human-centred approach is necessary for the future of work

The study ultimately finds that technological innovation and worker protection should not be treated as competing objectives. A sustainable future of work requires a human-centred, technology-responsive and rights-based approach.

Such an approach should combine:

- employment protection;
- social security and portability of benefits;
- transparency in algorithmic management;
- human oversight;
- data protection and privacy;

- equality and non-discrimination;
- occupational safety and health;
- reskilling and lifelong learning;
- collective representation; and
- accessible and effective remedies.

Thus, the study finds that the future of labour law lies not in preventing technological innovation but in ensuring that technological progress remains compatible with decent work, social justice, human dignity and fundamental labour rights.

9. SUGGESTIONS

The preceding analysis demonstrates that artificial intelligence, automation and platform work are transforming the traditional structure of employment. Indian labour law has already taken steps towards recognising emerging forms of work, particularly through the Code on Social Security, 2020. However, the rapid development of AI and algorithmic management creates additional regulatory questions relating to employment classification, transparency, worker data, social security, occupational safety, collective representation and access to remedies. The following recommendations may contribute towards developing a more effective and human-centred framework for the future of work in India.

9.1 Development of a Comprehensive Framework for AI and Employment

India should consider developing a dedicated legal or regulatory framework dealing specifically with the use of AI in employment. The existing labour Codes and data-protection legislation provide important foundations, but they do not comprehensively regulate AI-based recruitment, algorithmic management, automated performance evaluation and AI-assisted termination.

Such a framework should establish basic principles of transparency, accountability, fairness, human oversight and non-discrimination in the use of AI at the workplace.

The framework should also be sufficiently flexible to accommodate technological developments without requiring constant legislative amendment.

9.2 Clearer Determination of Employment Status

The distinction between employees, independent contractors, gig workers and platform workers should be examined on the basis of the actual nature of work rather than merely the terminology used in a contract.

This is particularly important where platforms exercise significant control over work allocation, remuneration, performance evaluation or access to work.

The EU Platform Work Directive provides a useful comparative model by requiring employment status to be assessed primarily on the basis of facts relating to actual performance of work, including the use of automated monitoring and decision-making systems.

India could consider adopting a similar fact-based approach while taking account of the specific characteristics of the Indian labour market.

9.3 Strengthening the Implementation of the Code on Social Security, 2020

The Code on Social Security, 2020 expressly recognises gig and platform workers and provides a framework for their social-security protection. The Code also provides for schemes and aggregator contributions for such workers.

Since the Code has been enforced from 21 November 2025, the priority should now be effective implementation rather than merely statutory recognition.

The government should ensure:

- simple registration procedures;
- widespread awareness among workers;
- effective identification of eligible workers;
- timely delivery of benefits;
- transparent implementation of schemes;
- appropriate participation of workers in decision-making; and

- portability of benefits across employers, platforms and States.

9.4 Portable Social Security for Platform Workers

Platform workers frequently move between different platforms and may simultaneously work for more than one platform. Social-security protection should therefore be connected primarily to the worker, rather than being dependent exclusively upon a particular employer or platform.

A portable social-security system would allow workers to retain their accumulated benefits when changing platforms, occupations or locations.

This is particularly important in India, where labour mobility across States is significant. The ILO has identified social protection as a central issue in the development of decent work in the platform economy.

9.5 Regulation of Algorithmic Management

India should introduce specific standards for algorithmic management in workplaces and digital platforms.

Platforms and employers using automated systems should be required to provide workers with understandable information concerning:

- the purpose of the automated system;
- the categories of data used;
- the principal factors affecting significant decisions;
- the consequences of automated decisions;
- mechanisms for challenging decisions; and
- procedures for human review.

This recommendation is supported by emerging international standards. ILO Convention No. 193 specifically addresses the use of automated systems in platform work, including monitoring, evaluation and decisions relating to work.

9.6 Mandatory Human Oversight for Significant Decisions

Important decisions affecting a worker's livelihood should not be left entirely to automated systems.

Where an AI system contributes to decisions concerning:

- recruitment;
- suspension;
- deactivation;
- termination;
- remuneration;
- significant reduction of work opportunities; or
- other adverse employment consequences,
- the worker should have access to meaningful human review.

Human oversight should be capable of considering individual circumstances and correcting technological errors. This would ensure that automation does not eliminate accountability.

9.7 Protection Against Algorithmic Discrimination

AI systems used in employment should be subject to appropriate safeguards against discrimination.

Employers and platforms should periodically assess whether their systems produce discriminatory outcomes based on legally protected characteristics. Where discriminatory effects are identified, appropriate corrective measures should be required.

The principle should be simple: an employer or platform should not escape responsibility merely because a discriminatory decision was produced by an algorithm rather than directly by a human decision-maker.

9.8 Protection of Worker Data and Privacy

The expansion of AI-based monitoring makes worker data protection increasingly important. Employers and platforms should collect only data that is necessary for legitimate employment purposes.

Future regulation should establish clear safeguards against:

- excessive workplace surveillance;
- unnecessary location tracking;
- collection of personal information unrelated to work;
- intrusive behavioural profiling;
- monitoring outside working periods; and
- unauthorised sharing of worker data.

The EU Platform Work Directive provides a useful comparative example by restricting certain categories of personal-data processing through automated monitoring and decision-making systems.

India can develop appropriate safeguards while ensuring consistency with the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023.

9.9 Right to Explanation and Effective Remedy

Workers affected by significant automated decisions should have access to a meaningful explanation of the decision and an opportunity to challenge it.

A worker should not be placed in a position where an account is suspended, employment is terminated or remuneration is reduced without knowing the basis of the decision or having access to an effective grievance mechanism.

Therefore, future legislation should establish:

- a right to receive relevant information;
- a right to challenge significant automated decisions;
- access to human review;
- reasonable time limits for resolving

grievances; and

- access to judicial or administrative remedies where necessary.

9.10 Reskilling and Upskilling of Workers

The response to automation should not be limited to protecting existing jobs. Workers should also be provided opportunities to adapt to changing occupations.

The government, employers and educational institutions should collaborate in developing programmes for:

- digital literacy;
- AI literacy;
- vocational training;
- technical skills;
- reskilling and upskilling;
- lifelong learning; and
- transition into emerging occupations.

Employers introducing substantial automation should, where practicable, consider retraining and redeployment before resorting to workforce reduction.

9.11 Strengthening Occupational Safety and Health

The concept of occupational safety should be expanded to address technological and psychosocial risks associated with AI-enabled work.

Regulation should consider risks arising from:

- excessive digital monitoring;
- increased work intensity;
- constant performance evaluation;
- long working hours;
- stress caused by algorithmic management;
- occupational isolation; and
- physical risks associated with location-

based platform work.

ILO Convention No. 193 expressly addresses occupational safety and the right of digital platform workers to protection from serious workplace risks.

9.12 Ensuring Fair and Transparent Remuneration

Platform workers should receive clear information about how their remuneration is calculated.

Platforms should disclose:

- the basis of payment;
- commissions and deductions;
- incentives;
- penalties;
- changes in remuneration structures; and
- other significant factors affecting earnings.

ILO Convention No. 193 requires measures concerning timely payment and understandable information concerning remuneration and deductions.

India should similarly ensure that technological systems do not make remuneration structures unnecessarily opaque.

9.13 Strengthening Collective Representation

The changing structure of work should not weaken workers' right to collective representation.

Platform workers should be able to organise and collectively raise concerns relating to:

- remuneration;
- working conditions;
- algorithmic management;
- social security;
- occupational safety;
- data protection; and
- platform policies.

Digital forms of worker organisation should also

be recognised and facilitated where appropriate.

Collective bargaining can provide a flexible mechanism through which workers and platforms can respond to rapidly changing technological practices.

9.14 Worker Consultation before Major Technological Changes

Employers should be encouraged, and where appropriate required, to consult workers or their representatives before introducing AI systems that substantially affect employment.

Consultation should cover:

- the purpose of the technology;
- anticipated employment effects;
- changes in job responsibilities;
- monitoring practices;
- training requirements;
- data collection;
- possible risks; and
- proposed safeguards.

This would move labour law from a reactive model towards a more participatory model of technological governance.

9.15 Strengthening Labour Inspection and Institutional Capacity

Traditional labour inspection mechanisms may not always be sufficient for AI-driven workplaces. Labour authorities increasingly need technical knowledge to understand algorithmic management and digital-platform operations.

India should therefore consider:

- specialised training for labour inspectors;
- technical experts in AI and data systems;
- digital mechanisms for receiving complaints;
- cooperation between labour and data-protection authorities; and

- mechanisms for auditing compliance with AI-related labour standards.

The EU Platform Work Directive provides a useful example by recognising the need for competent authorities to have appropriate training and technical expertise in algorithmic management.

9.16 Platform Accountability

Where digital platforms exercise substantial control over working conditions, they should bear corresponding legal responsibilities.

A platform should not be able to avoid responsibility simply by describing itself as a technological intermediary where its actual activities involve significant control over work organisation.

Future Indian regulation should therefore clarify platform responsibilities concerning:

- worker registration;
- remuneration;
- social-security contributions;
- occupational safety;
- algorithmic management;
- data protection;
- grievance mechanisms; and
- transparency of contractual terms.

9.17 Recognition of Transnational Nature of Platform Work

Digital platforms can operate across national borders, while workers, platforms and customers may be located in different jurisdictions. ILO Convention No. 193 specifically recognises the cross-border nature of the platform economy.

India should therefore strengthen cooperation with other jurisdictions concerning:

- cross-border platform work;
- worker classification;
- social-security coordination;

- taxation;
- data protection;
- enforcement of labour standards; and
- access to remedies.

This would be particularly important for online platform work where the worker and client may be located in different countries.

9.18 Adoption of a Multi-Stakeholder Regulatory Approach

The regulation of AI and platform work should not be undertaken by government alone. Effective regulation requires cooperation between:

- government;
- employers;
- digital platforms;
- workers;
- trade unions;
- civil society;
- academics;
- technology experts; and
- relevant regulatory authorities.

Such a multi-stakeholder approach can help ensure that legislation remains both technically informed and responsive to workers' practical experiences.

9.19 Periodic Review of Labour Regulation

AI technologies develop rapidly. A regulatory framework designed for one technological environment may become inadequate within a relatively short period.

Indian labour regulation should therefore incorporate mechanisms for periodic review. Government authorities should regularly evaluate:

- employment trends;
- technological developments;

- worker experiences;
- effectiveness of social-security schemes;
- algorithmic-management practices;
- emerging occupational risks; and
- implementation gaps.

Periodic review would allow labour law to remain responsive without requiring an entirely new legislative framework for every technological development.

9.20 Overall Suggestion

The central suggestion of this paper is that India should adopt a human-centred, technology-responsive and worker-protective approach to the future of work.

Such an approach should not seek to prevent AI, automation or platform-based business models. Instead, it should ensure that technological innovation operates within a framework that protects fundamental labour rights.

The following principles should form the foundation of such an approach:

Technology should not determine the level of labour protection; the nature of work and the rights of the worker should remain central.

The recognition of gig and platform workers under the Code on Social Security, 2020 provides an important foundation. The subsequent enforcement of the Code in November 2025 and the adoption of ILO Convention No. 193 in June 2026 provide further momentum for developing a more comprehensive framework.

The future regulatory framework should consequently combine employment protection, social security, algorithmic accountability, data protection, occupational safety, fair remuneration, worker participation, reskilling and effective remedies. Such a framework can allow India to benefit from technological innovation while ensuring that the transition towards the future of work remains consistent with the principles of decent work and social justice.

10. CONCLUSION

Artificial Intelligence, automation and platform work are fundamentally transforming the world of work. The transformation is visible not only in the replacement or modification of particular tasks but also in the manner in which workers are recruited, managed, evaluated, remunerated and protected. The central concern of this study has therefore been whether traditional labour-law concepts and institutions are sufficiently capable of responding to these technological developments.

The study demonstrates that the impact of AI on employment cannot be understood simply through the question of whether technology will create or destroy jobs. AI and automation can eliminate certain tasks, transform existing occupations and create new employment opportunities. At the same time, they can alter the balance of control between employers, platforms and workers. Algorithmic management can perform functions traditionally associated with human managers, including allocating work, monitoring performance and influencing employment-related decisions. Consequently, the future of labour law must address not only employment displacement but also the quality, organisation and governance of technologically mediated work.

The analysis further demonstrates that platform work presents a particular challenge to traditional labour-law categories. Digital platforms may combine flexibility with significant forms of technological control. Workers may formally be classified as independent contractors while their access to work, remuneration and performance are substantially influenced by platform algorithms. The traditional distinction between employee and independent contractor may therefore become inadequate in situations where the actual nature of control is substantially different from the contractual description.

The Indian legal framework has taken an important step towards addressing this transformation. The Code on Social Security, 2020 expressly recognises gig workers and

platform workers and provides a statutory basis for social-security schemes for these categories. The Code on Social Security came into force on 21 November 2025, extending its framework to gig and platform workers and emphasising social-security coverage and portability. This represents an important development because it recognises that social protection cannot remain confined exclusively to conventional employer-employee relationships.

However, statutory recognition alone does not resolve all the legal challenges created by AI and platform work. Questions relating to employment classification, algorithmic management, automated decision-making, worker data, privacy, discrimination, occupational safety, collective bargaining and effective remedies require continuing legal attention. The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 provides a broader framework for personal-data protection, but the specific implications of AI-based workplace monitoring and automated employment decisions require consideration within the labour-law context as well.

The international legal framework has also developed significantly. The adoption of the ILO Decent Work in the Platform Economy Convention, 2026 (No. 193) marks a major development in international labour regulation. The Convention was adopted on 12 June 2026 and is the first ILO Convention specifically dedicated to the platform economy. It applies to digital labour platforms and platform workers and addresses fundamental rights at work, occupational safety and health, employment classification and other aspects of decent work.

Importantly, Convention No. 193 requires the classification of digital platform workers to be guided principally by facts relating to the performance of work and remuneration, taking account of the specific characteristics of platform work. This reflects an important movement towards examining the substance of the working relationship rather than relying exclusively on contractual labels.

The study also finds that the future of labour law must respond to the emergence of algorithmic

management. When an algorithm significantly influences recruitment, task allocation, remuneration, performance assessment or termination, the worker should not be left without information, accountability or a meaningful opportunity for review. Technological decision-making should therefore remain subject to principles of transparency, fairness, human oversight and effective remedies.

Another major finding concerns social security. The fragmented nature of platform work can make workers vulnerable to gaps in social protection, particularly where they move between platforms, employers and forms of employment. India's recognition of gig and platform workers under the Code on Social Security provides a foundation for addressing this problem. However, the effectiveness of such protection ultimately depends upon registration, implementation, financing, accessibility and portability of benefits. The ILO Convention No. 193 similarly places social protection within the broader framework of decent work in the platform economy.

The study also establishes that technological progress may create new forms of inequality. Workers with limited access to education, digital infrastructure and skills may find it more difficult to benefit from emerging employment opportunities. AI may also reproduce existing discrimination if automated systems are developed from biased data or poorly designed decision-making processes. Therefore, the transition towards an AI-enabled economy must be accompanied by investment in reskilling, upskilling, lifelong learning and inclusive access to technology.

The future of labour law should consequently move towards a human-centred and technology-responsive model. Such a model should not seek to prevent technological innovation or automation. Instead, it should ensure that technological development takes place within a framework of labour rights, social justice and human dignity. Employment classification should reflect the reality of work; significant

automated decisions should remain subject to meaningful human oversight; worker data should be appropriately protected; social-security benefits should be portable; and workers should have meaningful opportunities for collective representation and participation in technological change.

The research therefore concludes that the principal challenge for labour law in the age of AI is not technology itself but the regulatory relationship between technological power and worker protection. If AI and automation are governed without adequate labour safeguards, technological innovation may intensify existing inequalities and create new forms of precarious work. Conversely, if technological transformation is accompanied by appropriate regulation, social protection, skills development and worker participation, AI can contribute to productivity while supporting decent and meaningful employment.

For India, the way forward lies in building upon the existing Labour Codes, particularly the Code on Social Security, while developing more specific safeguards for AI-enabled employment and algorithmic management. The emerging international framework, particularly ILO Convention No. 193, provides a useful reference point for this development. At the same time, India's regulatory response must remain sensitive to its own labour-market conditions, including the large informal workforce, significant inter-State labour mobility and diversity of employment arrangements.

Ultimately, the future of work should not be determined solely by technological capability. It should be shaped through law, social dialogue, worker participation and public policy. The objective of labour law in the age of AI should therefore be to ensure that technological progress remains compatible with decent work, equality, social security, dignity and fundamental labour rights. The future of work must consequently be understood not merely as a technological future, but as a human and legal future in which innovation and worker protection develop together.

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F Important points before submission

Use only sources actually cited in your paper. A reference list should correspond to the sources used in the text and footnotes.

Verify the publication details and page ranges of scholarly articles against the original publications before submission.

For a legal research journal, you may use the ILI citation style or the journal's prescribed referencing style consistently.

The ILO Convention No. 193 was adopted in June 2026. Describe it as an adopted international instrument; do not assume it is binding on India without verifying its ratification and entry-into-force status.

If your journal requires a bibliography rather than a reference list, you can retain all relevant consulted works, including those not directly cited, subject to its submission guidelines.

My recommendation: For this paper, prioritise the legislation, ILO reports, EU Directive and peer-reviewed scholarship. These sources will provide a stronger legal foundation than relying heavily on general websites or news articles.