



Event: Domestic work in the ‘gig economy’

November 16, 2019
03:00 pm - 5:00 pm

Student Christian Mission of India
29, 2nd Cross, CSI Compound, Mission Road, Sampangi Rama Nagara

CONCEPT NOTE

The Centre for Internet and Society, India (CIS) and Domestic Workers’ Rights Union (DWRU) are hosting a discussion on the ‘gig economy’ and domestic work. This event is a part of the Association for Progressive Communication (APC) “Feminist Internet Research Network” project, supported by the International Development Research Centre, Ottawa, Canada.

EVENT OVERVIEW

Over the last few months, CIS and DWRU have been conducting research on digital platforms that provide domestic services in Bengaluru and Delhi. The study is exploring the ways in which structural inequalities, such as those of gender and class, are being reproduced or challenged by digital platforms. The project sites are Delhi and Bangalore, where we have conducted interviews with workers, companies, government representatives and domestic worker organisations.

The format of the event will be a presentation of the key research findings, and will be followed by a roundtable discussion. Some discussion points of key relevance will be:

1. The history of recruitment pathways in the domestic work sector, and the possible impact of digital platforms;
2. The similarities and differences between the work arrangements and conditions of domestic work and ‘gig work’;
3. The legal treatment of domestic work and ‘gig work’ from a labour rights perspective;
4. The gaps in current policy frameworks and the possible policy responses that can be devised.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

This project seeks to investigate the mediation of domestic and care work through digital platforms in India. These forms of labour fall within the informal economy, which employs the largest share of non-agricultural workers in the low and middle income countries.¹ Workers and economic units in the informal economy differ widely in terms of all metrics, including income levels, size and type of enterprise, and status of worker. According to the International Labour Organisation's Resolution on decent work and the informal economy, it refers to "all economic activities by workers and economic units that are—in law of practice—not covered or insufficiently covered by formal arrangements."² What this implies in practice for workers in the informal economy is greater vulnerability to poor work conditions, poverty, and violation of labour rights.

Women, particularly those with intersectional marginalities, including that of caste and class, are overrepresented in the informal economy globally and in India. Domestic work in particular has been stratified along the lines of caste and gender. Further, class has become more salient in producing stratifications in labour relations following urbanisation and gentrification. These intersections have shaped employment relations in the sector in different ways, which range from feudal to contractual models. Digital platforms are increasingly becoming intermediaries in this space, mediating between so called 'semi-skilled' or 'low-skilled' workers from lower classes, and millions of middle and upper class employers in tier I Indian cities. This is expected to shift the stratification of workers and employment relations in key ways.

AGENDA

- 03:00 - 03:15 Welcome and setting the scene**
- 03:15 - 03:45 Presentation of research findings by CIS**
- 03:45 - 5:00 Roundtable discussion**
- 05:00 Tea**

RSVP Details:

Email: aayush@cis-india.org or ambika@cis-india.org

Phone: +91-9920204488

¹ International Labour Office (2018). Women and men in the informal economy: A statistical picture. Third Edition. International Labour Organisation. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_626831.pdf

² International Labour Organisation (2002). 2002 ILC Resolution and Conclusions on Decent Work and the Informal Economy. <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/employment-promotion/informal-economy/lang--en/index.htm>