



DOMESTIC WORKERS IN THE 'GIG' ECONOMY

THE CENTRE FOR INTERNET & SOCIETY & DOMESTIC WORKERS' RIGHTS UNION

BACKGROUND

- **DIGITAL PLATFORMS AS INTERMEDIARIES**
- **ALTERNATIVE TO TRADITIONAL RECRUITMENT PATHWAYS**
- **DOMESTIC WORK: WORK INSIDE THE HOME**
- **FORMALISATION OR MORE PRECARIETY?**

METHODOLOGY: QUALITATIVE IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

WORKERS

- 12 + 6 in Delhi
- 15 + 6 in Bangalore

COMPANIES

- 9 in Delhi
- 8 in Bangalore

UNIONS

- 2 in Delhi
- 2 in Bangalore

LABOUR DEPARTMENT+SKILLING AGENCIES

- 3 in Delhi
- 1 in Bangalore

FINDINGS

- **BUSINESS MODELS**

Marketplace

On-demand

Digital placement agencies

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Updated:12/11/19

Maid-Bai, Cook-Chef
Experience: 1-3 Years
Age Range: 26-35 yrs
Address: [Redacted]
Work For: Part Time

[Details](#)

4.8★

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Updated:12/11/19

Maid-Bai, Babysitter-Nanny
Experience: More than 5 Years
Age Range: 36-45 yrs
Address: [Redacted]
Work For: Full Day

[Details](#)

4.9★

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Updated:12/11/19

Maid-Bai
Experience: More than 5 Years
Age Range: 26-35 yrs
Address: [Redacted]
Work For: Full Day

[Details](#)

5★

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How does it work?



Search

Use our simple search and tell us what you require. See list of all the available maids in your area



Shortlist

View the complete profile of the hundreds of available maids and shortlist as per your preference



Meet, Select & Relax

Talk to the maid on the phone or meet her personally. Select the maid and pay only after the maid joins

What we offer?



Housemaids



Cook



Baby Sitters



Senior Citizen Care

How it Works



Select size of your bathroom

Browse through various packages and services



Choose your time-slot

Pick time as per your convenience



Hassle-free service

Our professionals will get in touch with you an hour before the service

UrbanClap connects you with the bathroom deep cleaning experts in your vicinity. Once you book a service on the

Need Bathroom Deep Cleaning for:

Floor >

Toilet & Washbasin >

Tiles, Mirror, Windows >

All The Above >



- **CONDITIONS OF WORK**

- Higher wages, enforcement of min. wage
- Digital records, task disaggregation
- Low entry barriers for workers in most cases
- Usually requires physical mobility to move around the city in search of work
- Some acted as grievance redressal mechanisms
- Potential for discrimination

- **ON LOW ENTRY BARRIERS**

RK: Haan mein toh badi khush thi ki itni jaldi ho gaya itna ek dum se phone aa gaya. Hafta bhi poora complete nahi hua tha phone aa gaya tha 3-4 din mein. Total 4-5 din mein hi kaam ho gaya. [Yes, I was very happy that it happened so fast, I suddenly got a call. Even a week had not passed, the call came within 3-4 days. The entire process was over in 4-5 days.]

Interview with woman worker on a platform, New Delhi

FINDINGS

- **PLATFORM TRANSPARENCY**

- Opaque operations
- Demand and supply mismatch
- Lack of trust
- Existence of multiple intermediaries
- No information about ratings
- No feedback on employers



- **ON PLATFORM TRANSPARENCY**

S: Woh company wale aake itne sawal poochte hain aur hum unka bharosa karke unko aise hi jawab dete hain jaise hum aapko de rahe hain. Woh humein bharosa dilake gaye the ki humein kaam milega, par kuch nahi mila. Humein badle mein kuch nahi mila. Itna samay barbaad kiya humne, usse toh kuch ghar ka kaam hi kar lete. [They come here asking so many questions, and we answer them like we are answering yours (the researchers’). They promise us jobs, but we do not get anything in return. It is a waste of time, we could have done some housework in that period]

Interview with worker on marketplace platform, New Delhi

FINDINGS

- **PROFESSIONALISATION**

- Soft skills training
- Workers treated as independent contractors without benefits
- Professionalisation = Masculinisation

- **COLLECTIVE BARGAINING**

- Unions were largely unaware of the function of platforms
- Initial collectivisation attempts

- **ON PROFESSIONALISATION**

“Ye humei partner bolte hai par hum sirf naam ke partner ke hai. Unka joh mann kare karte hai, humaare paas unki sunne ke alaawa koi chaara hai nahi. Aap bataaiye, kya ye koi partner hua? [They call us partners, but that is just a misnomer. Eventually, they do what they want to do and we have no option but to obey. Is that what a partner is?”]

Interview with worker on on-demand platform, New Delhi

- **ON THE ROLE OF PLATFORMS**

“The onus has to be on the jobseekers to take care of their employment their employer and themselves. We are only an aggregator and we do everything we can to help, but at one point we want them to become responsible for themselves.”

Interview with marketplace platform, New Delhi

CONCLUDING REMARKS

- **IS 'GIG WORK' NEW?**

- **GIG WORK IS NOT JUST
UBER/OLA/SWIGGY**