



MBA – HRD
 Department of Commerce
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Guest Lectures

Careers, HR & Leadership in the AI Era

On 8 November 2025, the Skill Development Cell (SDC) organized a guest lecture by **Ovais Rehman (HR & Technology (AI) Professional / Industry Expert)**, focusing on careers, leadership, strategic HR, and the growing role of artificial intelligence in organizations. Mr. Rehman shared his diverse academic background and professional journey from software development to leadership roles, explaining how this transition strengthened his analytical thinking and strategic outlook.



He emphasized that HR today is not limited to administrative functions but is about managing performance, potential, and purpose. By citing real-life examples of resilience and failure, he highlighted the importance of perseverance, adaptability, and continuous learning in career development.

The session covered strategic HR practices such as talent acquisition, employee engagement, and retention, stressing the need for organizations to proactively address employee expectations. A key highlight was the use of AI and data analytics in HR, where he explained how tools like HR analytics, Excel, and Power BI support informed decision-making while underscoring ethical and unbiased AI usage.

He also discussed hybrid work models, work-life balance, upskilling, and internal mobility. The lecture concluded with his view of leadership as the ability to influence, guide, and motivate others while managing everyday challenges effectively.

Generative AI for Next-Gen HR Leaders

Under the Pragyata Guest Lecture Series, the Corporate Relations Team, DSE organized a guest lecture on “Generative AI for Next-Gen HR Leaders” by **Nishant Bhardwaj, Founder & CEO of Skillgorithm**.



The session introduced students to the evolving role of Artificial Intelligence in Human Resource Management.

Mr. Bhardwaj explained the differences between Traditional AI, Generative AI, and Agentic AI, stressing the importance of AI fundamentals, data usage, and user behavior. He highlighted AI governance and data privacy, emphasizing ethical use and protection of confidential organizational data. He discussed practical HR applications of Generative AI, such as automated job descriptions, AI chatbots, interview scheduling, personalized learning content, and workforce analytics.

The lecture concluded by emphasizing that future HR leaders must balance AI-driven efficiency with human judgment, adopting strategic and responsible roles in AI-enabled workplaces.

Applying Design Thinking in HR: An Empathy-Driven Approach to Innovation

The guest lecture on Design Thinking, organized by Team HighQ – The HR Club of MBA-HRD, Delhi School of Economics, was an enriching and insightful session delivered by **Bhavendra Kumar Jha, Human Capital Specialist at Genpact.**



The session helped students understand the relevance of design thinking in HR through a strong focus on empathy and user-centric problem solving. Mr. Jha explained empathy as the foundation of design thinking, emphasizing the need to genuinely understand users' emotions, expectations, and pain points rather than relying on assumptions.



He clearly outlined the five stages of design thinking—empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test—making the framework easy to grasp and practically applicable.

He further linked theory with practice by sharing real-world examples from his professional experience, including insights from the hospitality sector at Holiday Inn. These examples demonstrated how empathy-driven approaches and structured thinking improve service quality and user experience. Overall, the session successfully bridged academic concepts with real-life application and offered valuable perspectives on innovation in HR.

Fire Safety Awareness Workshop



The Fire Safety Workshop organized by Team Sankalp at the Delhi School of Economics (DSE) campus aimed to create awareness and preparedness among students for fire emergencies. The session witnessed active student participation and was conducted by trained firefighters, who explained fire hazards, safety protocols, and emergency response measures.

A live demonstration on the proper use of fire extinguishers was conducted, followed by a controlled fire simulation where students were trained to handle real-life fire situations. The workshop significantly enhanced practical understanding of fire safety and emergency management.



Upvishtha: “Building Sustainable Social Enterprises

Upvishtha, a guest lecture organized by Team Sankalp, revolved around the theme “Building Sustainable Social Enterprises: Innovation, Impact, CSR & ESG for Future Changemakers.” The session was delivered by Ms. Meghna Joshi, Founder of Swan Livelihood, who brought valuable real-world perspectives on designing and scaling social enterprises that create meaningful and measurable impact. Drawing from her entrepreneurial journey, she highlighted how innovation can be leveraged to address complex social challenges while ensuring financial viability and long-term sustainability.



The lecture placed strong emphasis on integrating CSR and ESG principles into core business strategies rather than treating them as peripheral initiatives. Ms. Joshi explained practical approaches to impact measurement, stakeholder engagement, and building community-driven models that balance purpose with performance. Her insights encouraged students to think beyond traditional profit-centric frameworks and view entrepreneurship as a force for inclusive and responsible growth.



Additionally, the session prompted students to reflect on the importance of ethical leadership, social accountability, and environmentally conscious decision-making. It inspired participants to critically examine how future business leaders can align organizational objectives with broader social and environmental responsibilities in an evolving global ecosystem, reinforcing the idea that sustainable enterprises are key drivers of long-term social transformation.

Learning Beyond the Classroom at Hero MotoCorp

The Student Development Cell (SDC), MBA (HRD), Delhi School of Economics, successfully organized an enriching Industrial Visit to the Hero MotoCorp manufacturing plant in Gurugram, with the objective of bridging the gap between theoretical classroom learning and real-world industrial practices. The visit served as a valuable experiential learning opportunity, enabling students to witness the practical application of management and operational concepts in one of India's leading manufacturing organizations.



The visit provided students with first-hand exposure to large-scale manufacturing operations, offering deep insights into how strategic planning, operational efficiency, and process optimization come together on the shop floor. Students closely observed the end-to-end production process, including assembly line functioning, workflow synchronization, automation support, and stringent quality control mechanisms that ensure high standards of consistency, safety, and product reliability.



The structured layout of operations highlighted the importance of precision, coordination, and standardization in achieving operational excellence.

A significant learning outcome of the visit was understanding the implementation of Total Productive Maintenance (TPM) as a core operational philosophy at Hero MotoCorp. Students gained insights into how proactive maintenance practices, regular equipment monitoring, and employee involvement in maintenance activities contribute to improved machine efficiency, reduced breakdowns, and minimal operational downtime. These observations reinforced the critical role of continuous improvement, discipline, and preventive systems in sustaining high productivity levels in manufacturing organizations.

Equally insightful was the exposure to Hero MotoCorp's progressive and employee-centric Human Resource practices, which align closely with contemporary HRD principles. Students learned about the organization's comprehensive employee welfare initiatives, including inclusive maternity leave policies, the provision of crèche facilities to support working parents, and a strong emphasis on employees' mental health and emotional well-being.

Chapter Meets: Reconnecting Roots and Relationships

Bangalore Chapter Meet

The Alumni Committee successfully organized the Bangalore Chapter Meet, bringing together alumni across batches for an engaging and collaborative gathering. The event began with introductions among attendees, creating an inclusive space that encouraged alumni to reconnect with batchmates while also building new connections with seniors and juniors. The meet fostered a welcoming environment where participants could strengthen professional and personal networks within the MHROD community.



A key highlight of the session was the sharing of career updates, success stories, and individual journeys, offering valuable insights into diverse professional paths and industry experiences. Alumni reflected on their growth since graduating and exchanged perspectives that inspired meaningful dialogue and mutual learning.

The gathering also included updates on ongoing alumni chapter activities and discussions around future plans, reinforcing a shared vision for strengthening alumni engagement.

An open forum allowed participants to share ideas, provide feedback, and explore volunteering opportunities, encouraging active participation and collective ownership of the alumni network.



The event concluded with informal networking over refreshments, allowing conversations to continue in a relaxed setting. Overall, the Bangalore Chapter Meet served as a vibrant platform for reconnection, collaboration, and community-building, further strengthening the bond between alumni and the institution.



Hyderabad chapter meet

The Alumni Committee successfully hosted the 2nd edition of the Hyderabad Chapter Meet, continuing its efforts to strengthen the ever-evolving relationship between alumni and the Delhi School of Economics. The gathering brought together alumni from multiple batches for an engaging afternoon marked by meaningful conversations, shared experiences, and a strong sense of nostalgia. The meet unfolded as a warm and lively interaction, with alumni reminiscing about their time at DSE, recalling classroom discussions, campus life, friendships, and formative moments that shaped their academic and professional journeys. These reflections offered a powerful reminder of the lasting impact of the institution and reinforced the shared MHROD identity that connects alumni across generations.



Alumni generously shared their professional experiences and career insights, offering valuable perspectives on industry trends, workplace realities, and personal growth. The exchange encouraged informal mentorship and peer learning, creating a supportive space for dialogue and collaboration.



Many alumni also took the opportunity to extend their heartfelt wishes and words of encouragement to the current batches, motivating them to make the most of their time at DSE and approach their future endeavors with confidence.



Overall, the Hyderabad Chapter Meet served as a meaningful platform for reconnecting, reflection, and renewal. By fostering dialogue between past and present, the event reinforced a strong sense of belonging and underscored the Alumni Committee's commitment to nurturing lifelong connections within the MHROD community.

News from the HR World

Govt Plans April 1 Rollout of India's New Labour Codes to Align With Financial Year

The Government of India is planning to implement its four consolidated Labour Codes from April 1, 2026, aligning their rollout with the start of the financial year to help businesses manage transition costs more effectively. Announced in January 2026, this potential new timeline reflects the government's efforts to streamline compliance and mitigate short-term financial burdens on employers arising from revised social security and wage rules.



Under the proposed schedule, the final rules for the Code on Wages, Code on Social Security, Industrial Relations Code, and Code on Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions are expected to be finalized by mid-February before the April implementation. This alignment is intended to offer companies a cleaner financial reporting start and ease adjustments to changes in provident fund (PF) contributions and gratuity costs linked to updated wage definitions.

Gurugram Employee's Refusal of 'Coffee Chat' With Boss Leads to Project Removal — Workplace Harassment or Attitude Issue?

A corporate employee in Gurugram alleges that declining an informal “coffee chat” invitation from his manager resulted in being removed from a key project, sparking a wider debate on workplace boundaries and corporate culture in India's offices. Reported in January 2026, the incident highlights growing tensions between evolving professional expectations and informal networking norms.

The employee, who works in a corporate firm on Golf Course Road, detailed in a Reddit post how his manager regularly initiated off-hours interactions framed as mentorship, including late evening calls and unstructured conversations. While initially tolerated, these interactions eventually crossed personal boundaries, leading him to disengage. After he refused to meet his boss for coffee at a weekend networking spot, he was reportedly taken off a major project. According to the account, the manager later implied that “attitude matters more than talent” when questioned about the decision.

The employee said he sought help from the Human Resources department, but the complaint was closed due to lack of documented evidence, with HR advising him to set firmer boundaries and avoid being alone with the manager. This aspect of the episode has fueled discussions about how subtle forms of pressure and undocumented expectations can leave employees vulnerable in grey areas of workplace culture.

Tier-2 & Tier-3 Cities Anchor Talent Retention Amid Hiring Slowdown and Muted Salary Growth

According to a recent report by upGrad Rekrut, an increasing number of HR leaders are finding that retention in smaller cities is as good as or better than in traditional Tier-1 centres, even without offering higher pay. This suggests that employees in these regions are less likely to switch jobs or leave roles despite limited salary increases, making these markets attractive for long-term workforce continuity. Nearly 79 % of HR leaders surveyed said retention levels in Tier-2/3 cities match or exceed those in metros



The report also highlights a broader shift in how companies are managing talent: retention is increasingly driven by workplace architecture such as flexible work models, learning access, and location strategy rather than compensation alone. With salaries remaining muted, employers are focusing on redesigning roles, workflows, and employee experience to keep staff engaged and reduce attrition. Additionally, hiring activity from smaller cities is expected to grow over the next year, with tech roles including those related to AI, data analytics, and automation becoming more common outside major metros. This decentralisation of hiring is seen as a way for companies to balance cost efficiency with talent access amid slower national hiring trends.

JWIL Infra Appoints Sunita Thakur Kohli as Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO)

JWIL Infra Limited has appointed Sunita Thakur Kohli as its new Chief Human Resources Officer, strengthening the company's leadership in people strategy, governance, and organisational growth. Announced in January 2026, this strategic hire underlines JWIL's focus on building robust HR and administrative capabilities as it expands in the water and wastewater infrastructure sector.

Kohli brings over 33 years of cross-functional leadership experience, most recently serving in senior HR roles at SUEZ India, including Senior Vice President – Human Resources, Admin & Communications where she led enterprise-wide HR transformation, communications, and administrative governance. Her earlier career also spans significant operational and business roles, from internal audits and sales leadership to plant operations, providing her with a holistic perspective on organisational development and people management.

In her role at JWIL Infra Limited, Kohli will oversee Human Resources, Administration, Communications, and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) functions, playing a key role in shaping the company's culture and talent agenda as it accelerates growth across India's water infrastructure landscape.



Insurance Staffers Demand Rollback of FDI Increase and New Labour Codes

Staff members of public sector insurance companies have called for the rollback of recent increases in foreign direct investment (FDI) limits in the insurance sector and the newly introduced labour codes, saying these policy changes weaken employee protections and threaten the viability of public insurers. Announced in January 2026 from Nagpur, the demand was made by the General Insurance Employees Union (Western Zone) ahead of its two-day convention on January 24–25.

Union president Pradeep Dharamthok said that the current FDI regime and labour code reforms were undermining the strength of public sector general insurance firms and diluting safeguards for workers. About 150 delegates from multiple states are expected to participate in the 30th union convention, which will be inaugurated by economist Srinivas Khandewale.

Union leadership, including general secretary Prashant Dixit, said the convention will focus on structural challenges facing the sector, including the government's policy direction and a proposed merger of four public sector general insurers. Key demands to be adopted as resolutions include permanent recruitment at all levels, implementation of a long-pending wage revision stalled since August 2022, establishment of a 30 % family pension, and a 14 % employer contribution to the National Pension System.

The union's stance reflects broader concerns among insurance employees about safeguarding the public sector framework and ensuring fair employment conditions amid ongoing policy shifts in the industry

Ms. Jyoti Sharma, a distinguished alumna from the Batch of 2010, has been appointed as the Associate Director at Cognizant.

With over 15 years of extensive experience across HR transformation, talent acquisition, and strategic people management, ma'am has consistently demonstrated visionary leadership and a passion for driving organizational growth. Her journey—from shaping HR initiatives at Wipro and Hexaware to leading impactful programs at Cognizant—reflects her dedication to empowering people and building future-ready workplaces.

This milestone stands as a testament to her commitment, perseverance, and professional excellence.

Ms. Surabhi Loshali Appointed CHRO at Ather Energy to Lead People & Culture Strategy

Ather Energy has appointed seasoned HR leader Ms. Surabhi Loshali as its Chief Human Resources Officer, effective January 5, 2026, marking a strategic expansion of its leadership team. With over 20 years of experience driving people strategy, organisation design, talent management, and culture transformation across industries, she brings deep expertise from senior roles including Group CHRO at Strides Pharma Science and leadership stints with global firms. In her new role, Loshali will champion Ather's people and culture strategy, prioritising leadership development, scalable HR systems, and workforce readiness as the company scales in India's EV ecosystem. With a strong record of building high-performance, purpose-driven cultures, her appointment reflects Ather's commitment to investing in people leadership to support innovation and long-term growth.

Ms. Radhika Singh, distinguished alumna from the Batch of 2013, has been appointed as the Head of Human Resources at PharmaACE - Analytics Center of Excellence.

With an illustrious career spanning over 28 years, she has consistently exemplified visionary HR leadership and strategic excellence. From leading transformative people initiatives at Escotel Mobile Communications, steering impactful HR strategies at HSBC, and driving organizational growth as Managing Director & Head of Human Resources at JP Morgan Chase, to taking on a pivotal role as Partner at EY, his journey reflects an unwavering commitment to people, culture, and organizational transformation.

Ms. Neetu Sidana Thapliyal, a distinguished alumna from the Batch of 2009, has been appointed as the Global Head of People and Culture at Stemz Healthcare

With over 16 years of rich experience, she has consistently exemplified visionary leadership in the HR domain. From managing large-scale talent initiatives at EY and Max New York Life Insurance to driving strategic growth as Director & Head of Human Resources at Forvis Mazars Group, her journey reflects a deep commitment to organizational transformation.

In her new global role, she will be instrumental in shaping culture, building leadership capability, and driving HR excellence across international lines.

Mr. Ajay Mishra Appointed CHRO – Sustainability, EHS & Admin at MAHLE ANAND

Ajay Mishra, an alumnus of the MHROD Batch of 2005, Delhi School of Economics, has been appointed Chief Human Resources Officer – Sustainability, EHS and Admin at MAHLE ANAND Thermal Systems Pvt. Ltd. In his new role, he will lead HR strategy while driving sustainability and EHS initiatives, reinforcing MAHLE's commitment to responsible and future-ready growth.

Mr. Gaurav Ahluwalia from the Batch of 1997 Named Vice President & Head of People & Communities, India & South Asia at Cisco

Gaurav Ahluwalia, alumnus of the MHROD Batch of 1997, Delhi School of Economics, has been appointed Vice President & Head of People & Communities for India and South Asia at Cisco, where he will lead regional people strategy, culture-building and talent development efforts at a pivotal time for the company's growth. With nearly three decades of HR leadership across global organisations, Ahluwalia's role underscores Cisco's commitment to fostering an inclusive, future-ready workforce aligned with evolving business needs.



Recent Developments in Labour Laws



Aaditya Gupta
(MBA HRD 2024-26)

India's new labour codes feel less like a policy change and more like a reset of how work, workers, and workplaces are defined. With the implementation of the four labour codes on 21 November 2025, the focus has clearly shifted from fragmented compliance to a more integrated, people-centric framework.

From an HRD lens, the Code on Wages brings long-needed clarity. As Peter Drucker rightly said, "What gets measured gets managed." A uniform wage definition and national floor wage simplify payroll structures but also push organizations to rethink compensation fairness. For HR professionals, this is an opportunity to align pay with transparency rather than legacy practices.

The Industrial Relations Code is perhaps the most debated.

Easier compliance and recognition of fixed-term employment give organizations flexibility, but they also demand stronger employee engagement. Flexibility without trust can weaken industrial relations. As future HR leaders, we'll need to balance business agility with genuine dialogue. As Peter Drucker said, "The best way to predict the future is to create it." IR can no longer be reactive.

The Code on Social Security is a milestone for inclusive growth. Extending benefits to gig and platform workers reflects the reality of today's workforce. For HR, this expands our role beyond payroll and policies into designing sustainable benefit models for non-traditional workers.

The OSH Code reinforces a long-overdue truth: employee well-being is directly linked to productivity. Safety, health check-ups, and humane working conditions are not costs, but investments. As Richard Branson says, "Take care of your employees, and they'll take care of your business."

Overall, these labour codes challenge HR to move from compliance managers to workforce architects. The real test lies in implementation, capability building, and mindset change. For students like me, this reform signals a future where HR is not just administrative but deeply strategic, ethical, and human-focused.



Recent Developments in Labour Laws



Abhay Kumar Maurya
(MBA HRD 2024-26)

India's transition to the New Labour Codes is a significant step toward modernizing how we work. For those of us entering the HR field, this is more than just a legal update; it is a chance to rethink how companies and employees interact. By merging 29 old laws into four clear codes, the system becomes easier to understand and much more relevant for today's fast-moving business world.

A major change comes from the Code on Wages. It requires that basic pay makes up at least 50% of an employee's total salary. For many workers, this means more money saved for the future through Provident Fund and Gratuity, but it also means less "take-home" cash every month. As HR professionals, our job is to help employees understand that this is a trade-off for better long-term

financial security. It is about building trust through clear communication and helping the workforce adapt to these new salary structures. Another vital part of these reforms is the focus on the modern workforce, such as gig workers and freelancers. In the past, these workers had very little legal protection. The new codes finally offer them a social safety net. Additionally, the introduction of Fixed-Term Employment allows organizations to hire for specific projects with more flexibility, while still giving those workers fair benefits. This balances the needs of a growing business with the rights of the person doing the work. Ultimately, these codes shift the role of HR from just following rules to being strategic partners. We are moving toward a future where the workplace is fairer, safer, and more inclusive. This is an exciting time to be in HRD as we help bridge the gap between outdated regulations and the needs of a new-age workforce

When I started learning labour laws for the first time in Semester II, the years attached to the Acts astonished me – from 1920s to 1970s. As India prepares to reap the demographic dividend of Yuva Shakti in our vision to build Viksit Bharat's economy, it is essential that the labour laws must reflect the reality of today's economy and tomorrow's workforce. The cumbersome compliance process must give way for ease of doing business and digital records while simultaneously safeguarding the workers' safety and wellbeing. The comprehensive definition of employees to cover platform workers and extension of social security umbrella to gig workers addresses the challenges of modern workplaces outside of traditional employment relations. The ease of compliance and raised threshold definition of



Akhilesh Sajeer
(MBA HRD 2024-26)

'factories' accelerates the bustling startup ecosystem, the world's 3rd largest. The flexible work arrangements serves as a relief for MSMEs, the engines of growth and exports in a particularly challenging competitive landscape of uncertain trade winds.

However, now the change management model comes in and the HR leaders must wear the change champion's hat to drive this transition from the old dusk to the new dawn. HR claims a strategic position in this changing business environment, where each HR dept must redefine employee categories, formalize employment contracts, ensure digital compliance, restructure compensations packages, redesign safety and welfare provisions from canteen to creche. The new codes are an ode to the message of Shramev Jayate!

Recent Developments in Labour Laws



Nitanshu Sagar
(MBA HRD 2024-26)

India's new labour codes aim to align labour regulation with the realities of today's evolving workforce, which now includes gig workers, contract staff, and hybrid roles. Consolidating multiple laws into four codes is a timely step that seeks to simplify compliance while expanding social security coverage, especially for workers previously outside formal protections.

However, the shift also brings concerns. Flexibility may lead to insecurity if implementation is weak or if organizations prioritize cost reduction over worker welfare. Much depends on state-level rule notification and employee awareness. This places HR professionals in a crucial role—not only ensuring compliance, but also

communicating changes, addressing concerns, and maintaining trust through transparency.

The Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code is particularly relevant as it extends beyond factories to offices and remote workspaces, addressing post-pandemic issues such as mental health, ergonomics, and long working hours. Overall, the labour codes reflect an important shift in thinking. Their success will depend on how effectively policy is translated into practice, ensuring worker protection keeps pace with changing work models.

India's new labour codes reflect a changing world of work and an effort to modernise labour regulation. A key positive is the inclusion of gig and unorganised workers, who long contributed to the economy without formal protection. Extending social security coverage to them is an important step toward inclusion and equity.

The move toward uniform definitions of wages, employees, and establishments also reduces long-standing confusion. From an HRD perspective, this brings greater clarity in policies, transparency in payroll, and simpler compliance for organisations.

However, the real challenge lies in implementation. Provisions that appear employee-friendly can be difficult in practice.

For example, completing full and final settlements within two days is ideal, but in large organisations it requires multiple approvals, pay calculations, leave adjustments, and coordination with finance or vendors, demanding robust systems.

HR professionals must therefore move beyond compliance to become change enablers upgrading systems, training managers, communicating changes, and maintaining trust. Managing flexibility and security for gig and contract workers adds further complexity.

Overall, the new labour codes offer a chance to build a more inclusive and modern workforce, but their success depends on thoughtful implementation that balances legal mandates with human realities.



Vijay M
(MBA HRD 2024-26)

Recent Developments in Labour Laws



Ansh Shrivastava
(MBA HRD 2025-27)

I never knew much about labour laws before. Honestly speaking, I thought labour laws were some boring rules written in thick books and only lawyers would read them. But recently, I started reading some information on the new labour laws applying in India, and slowly I knew much more on the subject. It was interesting too.

Four new labour codes have been introduced by India, replacing the old laws. These codes are the Code on Wages, Industrial Relations Code, Social Security Code, and Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions (OSH) Code. At first, the names of the codes seemed complicated, but after reading a bit about each one, things started looking clear. These laws are made to simplify rules and make them more practical for today's work culture.

One new law that really grabbed my attention was the Social Security Code. Earlier, benefits like provident funds, insurance, and maternity benefits were mostly applied to permanent employees. But with the new law, even gig workers and freelancers come under these benefits. Another important change is the Code on Wages, which ensures minimum wages, timely payment of salaries, and equal pay for men and women.

As a student, learning about these laws made me feel more aware and confident about entering the workforce.

The traditional idea of a "workforce" permanent employees working fixed 9-to-5 hours is rapidly losing relevance. The modern workforce is fluid, driven by the growth of the gig economy and platform-based work. For years, gig and platform workers operated in a regulatory grey area, contributing to the economy without formal labour protections. The Code on Social Security, 2020 marks a significant shift in this approach.

For the first time in India's legislative framework, the law clearly distinguishes gig workers and platform workers from traditional employees. This is not a mere definitional change but a recognition that the future of work is hybrid. By mandating a social security fund funded by aggregators



Adarsh Singh
(MBA HRD 2025-27)

contributing 1-2% of their annual turnover, the Code attempts to balance flexibility with employment security.

From an HRD perspective, this creates both challenges and opportunities. HR leaders must move beyond managing recruitment and retention to enabling talent access across a diverse ecosystem of freelancers and contractors. Key challenges include registering a transient workforce, ensuring compliance, and extending protection without diluting flexibility.

The new Labour Codes affirm that the new-age workforce is now a core pillar of the economy. For future HR practitioners, the task is to design inclusive policies that protect workers while sustaining the innovation that drives this evolving world of work.

Recent Developments in Labour Laws



Aswin Krishna
(MBA HRD 2025-27)

The concept of equal pay for equal work is a well-recognised legal precedent in India. The doctrine draws from Articles 14, 15, and 16 of the Constitution, was later codified in the Equal Remuneration Act, 1979, and was further strengthened by the recently enacted Code on Wages, 2019. It declares that there shall be no discrimination between male and female employees on matters of wages and recruitment. The ratification of this doctrine in 1979 and its further strengthening in 2019 set a strong precedent for advancing gender equality in the country. However, the social reality of this doctrine is more complex. Present laws represent workers as singular units of 'male' and 'female', disregarding how caste, class, disability, and other social factors can affect economic outcomes.

for instance, lower-caste women are overrepresented in lower-paid, informal sectors, where the enforcement of labour laws is weak. Women who are disabled or economically disadvantaged may not get adequate opportunities for education and training, affecting their income potential. Furthermore, there is a lack of recognition for the unpaid labour done by women in domestic work and caregiving.

These examples reveal the inadequacy of current legal frameworks in recognising the intersectional aspects of inequality. Fairness is not achieved by treating everyone the same, but by accounting for each person's needs. If we are to truly realise gender equality in the workplace, legal and policy efforts must engage better with the realities of intersectionality.

India's new labour codes represent one of the most ambitious overhauls of labour legislation since Independence. By consolidating 29 central laws into four comprehensive codes, the government aims to simplify compliance, improve ease of doing business, and align labour regulation with the needs of a fast-changing, new-age workforce. While the intent is progressive, the reforms demand a cautious and critical evaluation, especially from an HRD perspective.

On the positive side, the labour codes promise much-needed uniformity and clarity. Simplified definitions of wages, digitised compliance systems, and provisions for fixed-term employment can help organisations become more agile. For HR professionals, this creates opportunities to design transparent compensation structures, streamline payroll,

and adopt modern workforce planning models. The inclusion of gig and platform workers under social security is another notable step, acknowledging the realities of the evolving labour market. However, the reforms are not without concerns. Increased flexibility in hiring and firing, higher thresholds for standing orders, and diluted inspection mechanisms may weaken job security and collective bargaining power. For a workforce already grappling with uncertainty, this could heighten anxiety and erode trust in employers. If implemented responsibly, they can support both economic growth and workforce empowerment. If not, they risk becoming reforms that look progressive on paper but fall short in practice.



Bajil Shafeen
(MBA HRD 2025-27)

Recent Developments in Labour Laws



Mayank Jain
(MBA HRD 2025-27)

In late 2025, India ushered in a unified labour framework through the introduction of four Labour Codes on Wages, Industrial Relations, Social Security, and Occupational Safety replacing 29 fragmented and outdated laws. With India's workforce expanding, organisations required a simplified, transparent, and future-ready regulatory environment. The new Codes aim to rationalise compliance while expanding coverage to emerging forms of work, particularly gig and platform employment.

One of the most significant reforms is the introduction of a uniform definition of "wages," reducing long-standing ambiguities in payroll structures and ensuring accurate social security contributions. The formal recognition of gig and platform workers marks a historic step toward inclusion,

extending social security benefits to a segment that has largely operated outside legal protection. Fixed-term employment with parity in wages and benefits allows organisations greater flexibility without compromising employee rights.

From an HR perspective, the Codes signal a shift from reactive to proactive compliance. HR teams must overhaul payroll systems, update HRMS platforms, and revise employment contracts and policy manuals. In conclusion, while the transition poses short-term challenges, India's new Labour Codes lay the foundation for a more inclusive, transparent, and adaptable labour market.

India has formulated new labour codes that represent a milestone for the modification of the existing labour laws. By merging the entire gamut of existing laws within the bounds of four principal labour laws, the intention behind the modification lies within the desire to ease the laws, enhance compliance with the laws, and facilitate the functioning of employers and employees.

The new-age workforce is vastly different and distinct from previous times. Employees today seek flexibility, purpose, and better work-life balance. The emergence of gig economies, platform workers, and fixed-term contracts has significantly altered how organisations engage and manage employees. The new labour codes are taking cognizance of these dynamics by providing social security to gig and



Saurabh Kumar
(MBA HRD 2025-27)

and platform workers, and clearly stating how wages and conditions for employment are to be determined. The change that these developments bring to HR managers involves fairly complex responsibilities. On the one hand, the organisation gains flexibility in workforce planning and picks the best employees. On the other hand, HR managers must protect employees' rights to safety, health, and welfare, along with proper communication to create awareness.

If properly implemented, clearer regulations on employee representation, working conditions, and dispute resolution will help reduce conflicts. All things considered, the new labour codes reflect how work is developing in India and provide the HR community an opportunity to create equitable, adaptable, and people-centred workplaces.

Recent Developments in Labour Laws



Sharad Kumar Gopal
(MBA HRD 2025-27)

Recent developments in labour laws reflect a shift from regulating jobs to protecting people at work. As employment becomes more flexible and platform-driven, the law is gradually recognising workers beyond traditional, permanent roles. This inclusion acknowledges the realities faced by gig, contract, and informal workers who seek both flexibility and basic security.

From an HR perspective, these changes expand the role of HR from compliance managers to custodians of fairness and trust. Simplified and digital compliance systems support ease of doing business while improving transparency in wages and records. Provisions promoting gender inclusion, such as permitting women to work night shifts with safety safeguards, further highlight the human intent behind recent

reforms. However, the real challenge lies in implementation. HR professionals must translate legal intent into everyday practice—through clear communication, safe workplaces, and inclusive policies. Ultimately, recent labour law reforms position HR as a bridge between policy and people, ensuring that economic progress goes hand in hand with dignity and wellbeing at work.

The world of work in India is being quietly rewritten. As hybrid offices replace cubicles and algorithms influence hiring, India's four new labour codes attempt to align outdated labour laws with a workforce that values flexibility, dignity, and security in equal measure.

The Code on Wages introduces a uniform definition of wages and mandates timely, equitable remuneration. In an era where companies like Infosys and TCS are restructuring variable pay and performance-linked incentives for hybrid employees, this code nudges organisations toward transparent and fair compensation practices critical for retaining young, purpose-driven talent.

The Industrial Relations Code reflects the realities of a volatile business environment. By increasing thresholds for

layoffs and retrenchment approvals, it grants organisations operational agility, especially start-ups and MSMEs navigating uncertain markets. However, for employees, this places greater emphasis on HR-led trust-building, reskilling, and internal mobility as tools to offset perceived job insecurity.

Perhaps the most transformative is the Social Security Code, which for the first time formally recognises gig and platform workers. As platforms like Swiggy, Urban Company, and Uber redefine employment, extending social security to non-traditional workers signals a shift from “jobs for life” to “security for life.” Though implementation remains evolving, the intent aligns strongly with workforce inclusivity.



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Recent Developments in Labour Laws



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The workplace in India is changing quickly as a result of employee expectations, flexible work hours, and technological advancements. In light of this, the adoption of the new labor laws represents a significant attempt to modernize India's labor laws to reflect the country's shifting economic conditions.

The aim of the labor reform is to create four unified codes by codifying 29 current labor laws. Apart from guaranteeing the minimum wage and prompt payment, the Code on Wages offers a uniform definition of wages. The Industrial Relations Code provides more flexibility in workforce management by addressing employment terms, trade unions, and dispute resolution. Laws pertaining to worker welfare, working hours, and workplace safety are combined under the -

Laws pertaining to worker welfare, working hours, and workplace safety are combined under the Occupational Safety, Health, and Working Conditions Code. The Code on Social Security offers statutory protection to workers in the gig economy, platform, and unorganized sector. Apart from increased social security benefits, the labour codes represent a shift for workers towards more flexible and skill-based work arrangements. HR professionals must responsibly apply reform principles. This will determine the labour codes' ultimate success.

India has recently taken an important step toward modernising its labour framework with the activation of the four Labour Codes. These reforms consolidate 29 existing central labour laws into a simpler and more unified structure, covering wages, industrial relations, social security, and workplace safety. The objective is to reduce regulatory complexity while improving protections for workers.

One of the key changes is a common definition of wages, which brings greater consistency across sectors. The reforms also expand social security coverage to gig and platform workers, reflecting the evolving nature of employment. In addition, updated safety and working-



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condition norms aim to create healthier and more secure workplaces.

From a business perspective, the new framework is expected to streamline compliance through digitisation and standardised processes. While the overall intent is to balance flexibility for employers with safeguards for employees, the effectiveness of these reforms will ultimately depend on how smoothly they are implemented at the state and organisational levels. The objective is to reduce regulatory complexity while improving protections for workers. Updated safety and working-condition norms aim to create healthier and more secure workplaces.

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