
UNIVERSAL SOCIAL SECURITY OR REGULATORY ILLUSION? A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE CODE ON SOCIAL SECURITY, 2020 IN PROTECTING INFORMAL AND GIG WORKERS

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ABSTRACT

The enactment of the Code on Social Security, 2020 marks a significant shift in India's labour welfare framework by consolidating multiple social security legislations and extending statutory recognition to unorganised, gig, and platform workers. While projected as a move toward universalisation of social protection, the Code raises critical concerns regarding the transformation of social security from a rights-based entitlement into a scheme-driven regulatory mechanism. This paper critically examines whether the Code meaningfully advances the constitutional vision of social and economic justice embodied in the Directive Principles of State Policy, read with the expanded interpretation of Article 21 guaranteeing the right to livelihood and dignity.

Through doctrinal and normative analysis, the paper argues that although the Code symbolically broadens coverage, its reliance on executive discretion, ambiguous funding mechanisms, and registration-based access weakens enforceability. The framework for gig and platform workers, while innovative, stops short of resolving the independent contractor dichotomy or guaranteeing minimum social security entitlements. This structural ambiguity risks institutionalising precarity rather than mitigating it. The paper further situates the Code within India's international human rights obligations, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and relevant International Labour Organization standards. It concludes that without stronger accountability mechanisms and statutory guarantees, the promise of universal social security may remain aspirational, thereby diluting the human rights foundation of labour regulation in India.

Keywords: Social Security Code, Gig Economy, Right to Dignity, Precarity.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The history of India's labor legislation has been one of the welfare state approach, grounded in its constitutional commitment to social and economic justice. Till now, there were multiple legislatures providing for social security benefits, including the EI Act of 1948, the Provident Fund and Miscellaneous Provisions Act of 1952, the Maternity Benefit Act of 1961, and the more recent Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act of 2008.² Although these enactments have provided social security, the sectoral and threshold-based nature of these enactments has left many people behind, including the informal, casual, and non-standard workers in the economy.

For this purpose, twenty-nine labour enactments were consolidated in four Labour Codes and the Code on Social Security in 2020 was introduced as a part of a larger scheme by the Indian Parliament.³ The Code aims to cover "unorganised workers," "gig workers," and "platform workers." This is a welcome step towards universal social security with ease of compliance.

Ninety percent of India's working population accounts for unorganised workers. In such areas, workers might have no employer-employee relationship, and their voice might be minimal or nonexistent for bargaining. Therefore, social security no longer just relates to legislature; it is instead related to constitutional ideals of dignity, livelihood, and social justice. The Supreme Court has interpreted Article 21 as protecting workers' rights to their livelihood and humane working conditions.⁴ Furthermore, Article 39 of the Directive Principles of State Policy has directed the State to "forge a social order founded on justice... provide adequate means of livelihood... provide public assistance for unemployment, sickness, and disablement... promote living conditions conducive to health... and living wages."⁵

At the global level, social security is considered a fundamental human right, which is safeguarded by Article 22 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948,

²See The Employees' State Insurance Act, 1948, No. 34, Acts of Parliament, 1948 (India); The Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952, No. 19, Acts of Parliament, 1952 (India); The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961, No. 53, Acts of Parliament, 1961 (India); The Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act, 2008, No. 33, Acts of Parliament, 2008 (India).

³The Code on Social Security, 2020, No. 36, Acts of Parliament, 2020 (India).

⁴INDIA CONST. art. 21.

⁵*Id.* art. 39.

and Article 9 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights.⁶ Similarly, the International Labour Organization has influenced the role of India, especially through the Social Security Convention, 1952, which is known as ILO Convention 102.⁷

In the context of all of this, the Code on Social Security, 2020, poses some of the following structural issues to the fore. The language is permissive, and yet, it relies heavily on executive schemes, tied registrations, and funding, which is still conditional, particularly for gig workers. It suggests that the code is moving away from the welfare approach altogether because of the absence of a legislative basis for minimum benefits. The contention of this paper is that, despite the Code's best efforts towards universalization, the structure of the Code suggests a further shift towards the notion of a 'right' being granted or withdrawn at the discretion of the executive. This is demonstrated, as the paper argues, by a close reading of case law, legislative interpretation, and International Labour Organization conventions, to demonstrate how the Code does not, in fact, take forward the concept of social citizenship, and how it actually maintains precarity of job under the guise of 'reform.' This is demonstrated by the following structure of the paper, wherein Part II of the paper will discuss the historical evolution of the concept of 'social security.' Part III of the paper will discuss the Code's approach to gig workers, and Part IV of the paper will discuss how the Code compares to International Labour Organization conventions.

II. Constitutional and Human Rights Foundations of Social Security

Social security is not just ensured by laws; it is an integral part of the Indian concept of social justice, which is reflected in the Constitution. The Constitution has envisioned a welfare state with a commitment to social and economic democracy. In the Preamble and Part IV of the Constitution, there is a pledge to distributive justice and a dignified life, and therefore, it is a part of Part IV itself.⁸

⁶Universal Declaration of Human Rights art. 22, G.A. Res. 217A (III), U.N. Doc. A/810 (Dec. 10, 1948); International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights art. 9, Dec. 16, 1966, 993 U.N.T.S. 3.

⁷ILO Convention (No. 102) Concerning Minimum Standards of Social Security, June 28, 1952, 210 U.N.T.S. 131.

⁸INDIA CONST. pmb.; *id.* pt. IV.

A. Directive Principles of State Policy and Welfare State Mandate

The Directive Principles of State Policy, provides the overall, normative framework for the social security system in India. For example, in Article 38, the State should, above all, work towards the creation of a social order in which justice would become the foundation.⁹ Then Article 39 commits the State to the creation of conditions in which every citizen would have a chance to lead a decent standard of living, within the context of the economic policy and restrictions on the right to property as provided in Article 19(2).¹⁰ Article 41 commits the State, again within the context of the economic policy and the context of the overall economic planning, to the creation of conditions in which there would be effective public provision for unemployment, old age, sickness, and disablement.¹¹ Article 42 commits the State, again within the context of the economic policy and the context of the overall economic planning, to the creation of conditions in which there would be fair and humane conditions of work and maternity relief.¹² Article 43 commits the State to the creation of conditions in which there would be a living wage and a decent standard of living.¹³

Even though the DPSP is not justiciable in the courts, it is an essential part of the way in which the country is governed and should inform the way in which we interpret Part III of the Constitution. In *Minerva Mills Ltd. v. Union of India*, the Supreme Court has reaffirmed the view that there should be a harmonious construction of the Constitution, and that Parts III and IV of the Constitution are part of a cohesive and harmonious whole, and that the concept of social justice is part of the constitutional balance.¹⁴

B. Article 21 and the Expansion of the Right to Livelihood

The broader reading of Article 21 has strengthened the notion of labour welfare as an integral constitutional value. For example, in *Olga Tellis v. Bombay Municipal Corporation*, the Supreme Court of India held that “the right to life includes the right to livelihood.”¹⁵ This is because the loss of the ability to make a living is equivalent to

⁹INDIA CONST. art. 38.

¹⁰*Id.* art. 39.

¹¹*Id.* art. 41.

¹²*Id.* art. 42.

¹³*Id.* art. 43.

¹⁴*Minerva Mills Ltd. v. Union of India*, (1980) 3 SCC 625 (India).

¹⁵*Olga Tellis v. Bombay Mun. Corp.*, (1985) 3 SCC 545 (India).

the loss of life. This reading of the right to life under Article 21 paved the way for the inclusion of socio-economic rights under Article 21.

In *Consumer Education & Research Centre v. Union of India*, the Supreme Court of India held that the right to health and medical care for workers was included under Article 21, especially for workers in dangerous industries.¹⁶ The Supreme Court of India further held that the constitutional obligation of the State was to promote social justice and safeguard the health and safety of the working classes. The protection of the dignity of the human person was also related to the conditions of work for the individual.

It is quite clear from the above decisions that the welfare of the working classes in India is no longer seen as something that is desirable but rather something that is necessary and inherent in the right to life under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution. As Article 21 continues to be interpreted in a living manner, the digital workplace must be included under Article 21 because the risks to the working classes in India are now deeper. The constitutional commitment to social security, which includes support during illness, disability, unemployment, and maternity, is applicable to all working classes.

C. Social Security as a Human Right in International Law

The Indian constitutional system is not isolated; it is related to our international obligations. To cite an instance, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, under Article 22, recognizes the right to social security as an integral part of human dignity and free development of a person.¹⁷ Similarly, it is given under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, under Article 9, which is binding on India, that every person has the right to social security.¹⁸ The UN's Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights has been very clear that this right should be available, accessible, and adequate, and should not be arbitrarily denied.

Then comes the International Labour Organization's Social Security Convention, 1952, which provides for the minimum standards for income security in the possibility of

¹⁶*Consumer Educ. & Research Ctr. v. Union of India*, (1995) 3 SCC 42 (India).

¹⁷Universal Declaration of Human Rights art. 22, G.A. Res. 217A (III), U.N. Doc. A/810 (Dec. 10, 1948).

¹⁸International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights art. 9, Dec. 16, 1966, 993 U.N.T.S. 3.

unemployment, sickness, maternity, work injury, and old age.¹⁹ Though we have not ratified all the conventions under ILO related to the right to social security, they cannot be ignored when we have to interpret our law. In fact, our Supreme Court has cited conventions related to the right to life under Article 21. If we now connect all these dots, we have reached the normative right to social security under the Indian constitutional system, through the lens of human rights, and then through the lens of Supreme Court interpretation.

Continuing this line of reasoning, which takes us from the Indian constitution, through the lens of human rights, and then through the lens of Supreme Court interpretation, the next piece is the Code on Social Security, 2020. Any legislative initiative that treats the right to social security as discretionary or as grant-based under a scheme would be inconsistent with our constitutional foundation.

III. Architecture of the Code on Social Security, 2020

The Code on Social Security, 2020 consolidates nine major central labor laws into one code.²⁰ The laws include the Employees' State Insurance Act, 1948; the Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952; the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961; the Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972; and the Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act, 2008. The basic rationale behind consolidating the laws is the simplification, standardization, and widening of the coverage of the persons who were earlier beyond the purview of the laws. But the closer scrutiny of the code suggests that the basic framework is conditional in nature.

A. Expanded Definitions and Formal Recognition

The other important feature of the Code on Social Security, 2020, is how it recognizes and categorizes workers who are not in the traditional employer-employee relationship. Under Section 2(35) of the Code, a "Gig Worker" is a person who does some work or

¹⁹ILO Convention (No. 102) Concerning Minimum Standards of Social Security, June 28, 1952, 210 U.N.T.S. 131.

²⁰The Code on Social Security, 2020, No. 36, Acts of Parliament, 2020 (India); *see also* The Employees' State Insurance Act, 1948, No. 34, Acts of Parliament, 1948 (India); The Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952, No. 19, Acts of Parliament, 1952 (India); The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961, No. 53, Acts of Parliament, 1961 (India); The Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972, No. 39, Acts of Parliament, 1972 (India); The Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act, 2008, No. 33, Acts of Parliament, 2008 (India).

is engaged in some sort of work arrangement and who receives remuneration for such work, but does not possess the conventional employer and employee relationship.²¹ Similarly, under Section 2(60) of the Code, a “Platform Worker” is a person who is engaged in platform work, i.e., labor services coordinated through digital platforms.²² Under Section 2(86) of the Code, an “Unorganised Worker” is a worker who works in the unorganised sector and includes home-based workers, self-employed workers, and wage workers in the unorganised sector.²³

The important point is that, for the first time in the history of labour law in this country, these categories of workers are being recognized under the law. However, none of these categories of workers is referred to as an “employee” under the Code. On the other hand, the Code distinguishes between an “employee” and a “Gig/Platform Worker,” indicating that they will be governed by a separate body of law.

B. A Scheme-Driven Model for Social Security

The Code is unique in its treatment of benefits in comparison to other legislation. Instead of specifically referring to benefits such as provident funds, workers' insurance, or other defined benefits, it is based on the schemes formulated by the government. In this regard, Section 6 of the Code grants the Government the power to frame schemes that will offer benefits such as provident funds, pensions, insurance, etc.²⁴

Likewise, for workers not in organized establishments, Section 109 grants the Central Government the power to notify schemes that will offer benefits such as life insurance, disablement benefits, health benefits, maternity benefits, old age benefits, education, etc.²⁵ This is also applicable to gig workers or platform workers, with the funding provided by the Central Government, the State Governments, or the platform aggregator.

The repetition of the phrase “may frame and notify schemes” suggests that it is not an entitlement to these schemes but is left to the discretion of the Government to frame

²¹Code on Social Security, 2020, § 2(35).

²²*Id.* § 2(60).

²³*Id.* § 2(86).

²⁴*Id.* § 6.

²⁵*Id.* § 109.

such schemes. There is no promise of a minimum level of benefits; it is left to the discretion of the executive to frame these schemes, which will then determine the level of benefits that are ultimately provided.

C. Registration as a Gatekeeper to Benefits

The advantages of the Code depend on how registration is implemented. Section 113 of the Code states that unorganised, gig, or platform workers are to be registered on a particular online portal, wherein self-declarations and Aadhaar-based identities will also be included as part of the registration process.²⁶

The push for online registration might actually make administration and regulation simpler and easier to conduct. However, it might also result in the exclusion of those who are not tech-savvy or who may not possess proper ID documents. The nature of the Indian job market is already extremely informal, and seasonal migrant workers are also included in this market, so the criteria for self-registration might actually end up excluding those who need protection the most.

D. Funding Structure and Aggregator Contributions

The Code proposes a novel and forward-thinking approach to funding social security for gig platform workers. Under Section 114, the aggregators would contribute their share of the turnover to the social security fund, which would be capped by the legislature.²⁷ The exact percentage would be decided by the government, but this would be within the limits of 2% of the turnover or 5% of the amounts paid to the gig workers.

Although this clause acknowledges the economic value of digital platforms, many aspects of the matter are left to the executive branch. There is no information about the calculation of benefits, whether the amounts would be sufficient, and many other aspects of the matter are left unanswered. This clause marks a departure from the traditional concept of provident funds/employee state insurance, which would be related to the quantified relationship with the gig workers.

²⁶*Id.* § 113.

²⁷*Id.* § 114.

E. Centralization and administrative consolidation

The Code also tightens up who is in charge of the social security programs, bringing administration under fewer groups, like the Central Board of Trustees for the provident fund or the Employees' State Insurance Corporation. That's good, but that's also the negative aspect. Another important aspect that's lacking is the representation of the informal workers or the gig workers, which is unclear.

Overall, the Code brings together the broader definition, the scheme-based approach, the conditional registration, the discretion of the executives, and the funding. However, the actual value of the core right-based approach to the advancement of social security, rather than its negative impact, depends on the actual benefits that the new approach brings. The next section examines if the new approach makes the concept of social security hollow or if it actually has value.

IV. Structural Weaknesses and the Risk of Regulatory Dilution

The Code on Social Security, 2020 is based on the principle of universal coverage, but the design of the code also shows certain structural issues that may result in gaps and the erosion of the rights of the workers. The code covers not only the organized sector but also includes the informal sector, gig, and platform workers.

A. Registration-Based Access and the Risk of Exclusion

The 2020 Code on Social Security now directs unorganized workers, gig workers, and platform workers to sign up on a government online portal to receive welfare benefits. Section 113 of the code clearly outlines the procedure for this signup process, including the collection of Aadhaar IDs and the self-declaration of workers' employment status.²⁸ This could potentially create a national database of workers, but it is also raising several red flags, especially in terms of workers who are not tech-savvy or do not have internet connectivity.

The number of unorganized workers in India is large, including seasonal workers, which is a big concern in terms of their inclusion in the new code. The code places the

²⁸*Id.* § 113.

onus squarely on the workers to sign up, without the need for the employer or the platform to sign up their workers. The signup process is already proving to be a challenge for workers, which could mean that they miss out on the benefits that they could gain the most from. There is a fear regarding the digital authentication that it could end up sidelining the most vulnerable members of society.

B. Scheme-Based Governance and the Absence of Guaranteed Entitlements

The basic flaw in the Code is that it is based on the creation of welfare schemes, not the guarantee of welfare. Sections 6 and 109 provide the government with the power to create provident funds, insurance schemes, maternity benefits, and health schemes, among others.²⁹ However, the language used in the creation of these schemes is permissive, indicating that the government "may draft and announce" these schemes, not necessarily that it will.

The permissive language also gives rise to the issue of the enforcement of the Code itself. For instance, unlike other old laws, the Employees' State Insurance Act of 1948, and the Employees' Provident Funds Act of 1952, the Code does not indicate the funding and structural details of the schemes, which are left to the government.³⁰

From a constitutional perspective, the Code challenges the idea of rights-based social security. In fact, the constitutional foundation of the right of employees to social security is based on the welfare schemes that the government may develop in the future.

C. Uncertainty Surrounding Funding and How Contributions Work

Another obstacle is the way the Code proposes the funding of the system of social protection for gig and platform workers. It is proposed that the system of social security will be funded by the aggregators through a percentage of their turnover. This is a recognition of the footprint of digital platforms on the economy, although the percentage will be determined by the government in the legal framework.

A second obstacle is the overall approach to the funding of the system of social security.

²⁹*Id.* §§ 6, 109.

³⁰*See* The Employees' State Insurance Act, 1948, No. 34, Acts of Parliament, 1948 (India); The Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952, No. 19, Acts of Parliament, 1952 (India).

There is also a lack of tools to enforce the Code. An example of other countries is the United Kingdom, where the majority of the lawsuits filed by platform workers are on the issue of their employment status, as this determines the benefits they are able to access. In India, the Code recognizes the gig worker, but the nature of the employment relationship is not specified.

D. Weak Enforcement and Accountability Mechanisms

The bottom line is, enforcement is the hinge on which the system works. While the Code identifies and appoints inspectors as facilitators and establishes administrative boards, the overall enforcement vibe is about encouraging people to comply, not about the enforcement of the rights of the workers. While the overall facilitation and coordination of the system could potentially help the regulators work more smoothly, it does not guarantee the benefits to the workers.

The overall grievance procedures in the Code are limited. For the informal and gig economy, collective bargaining and union support are not a priority, and when benefits are denied, there are limited options.

Universal social security is a lofty idea. While the law is a significant shift in the way labor is evolving, it could also potentially lead to a system that is more discretionary and has weaker funding. In the following section, we will dive in further on this topic, specifically with regards to the gig and platform workers, the heart of the most contentious issues in labor laws.

V. Gig and Platform Workers: Recognized, But Without Protection?

The gig economy has completely redefined the way in which the workforce is being organized. In this era of digital age, millions of Indians are working in the gig economy, and the digital aggregators like Uber, Ola, Zomato, and Swiggy are driving the workforce. However, the workers of the gig economy are not recognized under the labor laws of the country.

In this regard, the Code on Social Security, 2020, is the first attempt to recognize the presence of the gig workforce in the country. The Code recognizes the presence of the gig workforce in the country by defining the term "Gig Workers" under Section 2(35)

and "Platform Workers" under Section 2(60).³¹ Further, Chapter IX of the Code has vested the power in the Central Government to introduce the social security schemes for the gig workforce, which would be funded by the digital aggregators.³² However, the Code does not recognize the gig workforce as "employees" in the Indian labor scenario. This has given rise to the "third category of employees," which is neither an independent contractor nor an employee.

Globally, the presence of the gig workforce is being recognized in the employment scenario of the country. In the UK, the *Uber BV v. Aslam* judgment recognized the presence of the Uber drivers in the employment scenario of the country as "workers."³³ Further, the State of California has made significant progress in the matter of the classification of the gig workforce in the employment scenario of the country.³⁴

The law does not specify who is an employee and who is an independent contractor under the Code, and so the full protections of full employment law regimes are left behind as the Code deals with social security issues. Therefore, the gig workers will get some form of social security, and the platforms will be able to retain their flexible, on-demand business model. The problem is, of course, the risk of "recognition without rights," where the law recognizes someone as an employee but does not necessarily provide them with any rights and protections.

The Code tries to regulate and provide social security to individuals against certain life events, such as illness, injury, unemployment, and old age. For gig workers, who already live in a state of income and employment insecurity, the protection should be higher, not lower. If the benefits are of poor quality or insufficient, then the protection is also of poor quality or insufficient.

The gig economy is a major test of India's labor law structure, and it is to be seen whether the Social Security Code will actually protect workers or simply recognize their vulnerability.

³¹Code on Social Security, 2020, §§ 2(35), 2(60).

³²*Id.* §§ 109–114.

³³*Uber BV v. Aslam* [2021] UKSC 5 (U.K.).

³⁴*See generally* Assemb. B. 5, 2019-2020 Reg. Sess. (Cal. 2019).

VI. Evaluating the Code on Social Security, 2020: Reform, Symbolism, or Regulatory Illusion

The Code on Social Security, 2020 is one of the bolder changes in our employment landscape in recent memory, as it attempts to consolidate the current law into a cohesive code and, perhaps more importantly, brings the marginalized into the formal fold. The significance of the Code, therefore, lies in how it modernizes the safety net for the country. What will ultimately define the success of the Code, however, is not how bold it is, but how effective it is for the worker, particularly those who need it the most.

The structure of the Code is also interesting, as it expands its coverage to include workers in the unorganized sector and gig and platform workers. This is relevant, as the Indian employment market is changing rapidly, with a significant percentage of workers not being easily categorized as employees.

The symbolism of the Code, however, is insufficient to define its success or failure, as the structure of the Code is heavily reliant on the government's notifications to make it operational, unlike other older codes such as the Employees' State Insurance Act, 1948, or the Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952, wherein the details of the schemes and funding are clearly outlined.³⁵

This Code is situated in the larger context of the evolution of the way in which we are regulating the labor market, moving away from the welfare-first approach and towards a more flexible regulatory style. Labor law scholars have traditionally grappled with the challenge of the balance between liberalizing economies and the welfare of the workforce, especially in developing nations. The opening up of the market stimulates entrepreneurship and innovation but, in the process, undermines the safety nets of the workforce, and the distribution of the safety nets depends upon the government's willingness and ability to provide financially and administratively.

³⁵See The Employees' State Insurance Act, 1948, No. 34, Acts of Parliament, 1948 (India); The Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952, No. 19, Acts of Parliament, 1952 (India).

One of the greatest problems with the Code is the absence of the mechanism of enforcing the Code. Informal and gig workforce members do not possess the power to insist upon the inclusion of welfare provisions in the Code, and the presence of unions in the workforce is low in the highly dispersed labor market.

The question, of course, is whether the Code really does expand social security for everyone, or simply reorganizes the status quo without formalizing the welfare provisions. The Code does introduce some fresh ideas, especially in the context of the financial contribution expected from the gig workforce, but even that is still in the realm of the hypothetical and dependent upon the decisions made in the future about how best to progress with the ideas introduced in the Code.

In this context, the Code appears to be merely an intermediate measure in the evolution of the more robust framework necessary to support the workforce while providing the freedom that the workforce requires.

VII. CONCLUSION

The 21st century has been a game-changer for the job market, and it has been a major challenge for us to regulate the workplace environment. Under such circumstances, the Code on Social Security, 2020, is a major step forward in thinking and reflecting on how we approach the concept of social security in our country and how we ensure all those who are outside the domain of social security are included in it as well. The paper has been successful in highlighting several aspects of the new code, such as it being the first legislation to protect gig workers and all the existing social security regulations being included in one single code. This is indeed a major step forward for the country and for the Indian approach to labor law reforms.

However, there is still a lot to be done to ensure the new approach is effective for the workers and their families as well. Though the new approach is a step forward for universal welfare, it also reflects a shift from the 'rights-based approach' to 'administrative discretion' in the approach to social security legislation as well.

The new approach to social security, as discussed, also reflects a shift in the

approach to constitutional law, as it is no longer an economic law, and it reflects the constitutional obligation of providing a humane working environment and protection for workers from economic hardship as well.

To make universal social security a reality, several issues need to be addressed in the upcoming reforms, as discussed in the paper as well.

The Indian approach to labor law reforms is all about finding a balance between economic needs and the worker's dignity, as enshrined in the Constitution of India, and the Code on Social Security, 2020, is a major step forward, though its success depends on how it is refined and implemented as well.