Understanding Online Employment in India
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Abstract

The nature of online employment in India has not been explored adequately. Such employment is often mediated through online platforms, which are websites and applications through which the transactions of buyers and sellers of labour and services are carried out digitally. Therefore, micro work, freelancing, and local gigs (on platforms such as Uber and Ola), largely constitute online employment in India. Even as jobs are becoming increasingly non-standard in nature, conventional labour market statistics in India do not explicitly capture online employment, either qualitatively or quantitatively. In this paper, we utilise survey data (Kathuria et al. 2017) to explore how online workers value their work and perceive its fairness. We also present an approach to gauge their bargaining ability to negotiate work arrangements and wages, and explore their potential for collective action. We conclude with recommendations to help online workers achieve secure livelihoods and social protection.