

2. Shram Shakti Niti 2025 – Economy

Recently, the Union Ministry of Labour & Employment has unveiled the Draft National Labour and Employment Policy, titled as Shram Shakti Niti 2025, aimed at reshaping India's labour landscape. It is currently open for public feedback.

Shram Shakti Niti 2025 – Overview

Introduction – The Shram Shakti Niti 2025 is India's national labour and employment policy framework aimed at building a resilient, inclusive, and equitable labour ecosystem. It seeks to ensure dignity, protection, and opportunity for every worker—formal or informal—while being rooted in India's civilizational ethos of "Śrama Dharma", which recognizes labour as a sacred and moral duty.

Vision – To create a One Nation Integrated Workforce by enabling universal social security, seamless skilling–employment linkage, and strong institutional mechanisms for labour governance and welfare.

Guiding Principles

Śrama Dharma Ethos – Emphasizes respect for all forms of labour, restoring the moral and social value of work as a means of human dignity and societal progress.

Inclusivity and Equity – Focuses on integrating marginalized segments—informal workers, women, migrant labour, and platform workers—into the formal labour ecosystem.

Resilience and Future-readiness – Encourages digital transformation, green job creation, and skill adaptability to navigate disruptions caused by automation, AI, and climate change.

Key Features of the Policy

1. Universal and Portable Social Security

Objective – To establish a Universal and Portable Social Security System that covers all workers—formal, informal, migrant, gig, and self-employed.

Universal Social Security Account (USSA) – Each worker will have a single, lifelong, portable social security account, integrating data and benefits from multiple schemes and systems –

1. Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)
2. Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC)
3. Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY)
4. e-SHRAM portal (for unorganized workers)
5. State welfare boards and Building & Construction Worker Boards

Outcome – Workers can access pensions, insurance, healthcare, and accident benefits seamlessly across states and sectors, ensuring mobility and continuity of coverage.

2. Skilling and Employment Linkages

Skill–Employment Continuum – The policy integrates India's major skill and employment initiatives to ensure continuous upskilling and employability through –

1. **Skill India Mission**
2. **National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS)**
3. **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)**

Digital Career Infrastructure – Establishment of the National Career Service–Digital Public Infrastructure (NCS–DPI) to –

1. Act as a real-time labour market platform connecting workers, employers, and training providers.
2. Enable AI-driven job matching, career guidance, and skilling recommendations.
3. Focus on town-level, MSME, and sectoral employment clusters.

Institutional Role – The Ministry of Labour and Employment will act as a National Employment Facilitator and regulator, coordinating between stakeholders for data-driven workforce planning.

3. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Accountability

Real-time Dashboards – Provide up-to-date analytics on employment trends, workforce participation, and policy performance.

Labour & Employment Policy Evaluation Index (LPEI) – A benchmarking tool to assess and rank State–

level performance on parameters like job creation, social security coverage, and gender inclusion.

Annual National Labour Report – To be tabled in Parliament each year, assessing progress and recommending reforms.

Independent Reviews – Encourages third-party and academic audits to ensure transparency, data integrity, and external accountability.

Implementation Architecture

Three-tier Governance Structure

National Level – National Labour and Employment Policy Implementation Council (NLPI) chaired by the Union Labour Minister. Responsible for policy coordination, cross-ministry convergence, and strategic oversight.

State Level – State Labour Missions (SLMs) to localize the national policy objectives and adapt them to regional contexts. States empowered to integrate local welfare boards, MSME councils, and training institutions.

District Level – District Labour Resource Centres (DLRCs) will serve as single-window service hubs for –

1. Worker registration and verification
2. Skilling and apprenticeship facilitation
3. Job matching and placement
4. Grievance redressal and welfare scheme access

Implementation Roadmap (Three Phases)

Phase I (2025–27) – Institutional Integration

1. Set up NLPI, SLMs, and DLRCs.
2. Digitally integrate EPFO, ESIC, PM-JAY, and e-SHRAM under USSA framework.
3. Launch pilot programs in priority sectors (construction, textiles, retail, logistics).

Phase II (2027–30) – Universal Rollout

1. Nationwide rollout of Universal Social Security Accounts.
2. Operationalization of Skill Credit System enabling recognition of prior learning.
3. Launch Employment Facilitation Cells in all districts.
4. Strengthen NCS-DPI to handle national-level job matching and analytics.

Phase III (Beyond 2030) – Continuous Evolution

1. Transition to paperless governance across labour institutions.
2. Incorporate predictive analytics for workforce planning.
3. Introduce dynamic policy renewal every five years based on evaluation data.

Expected Outcomes

Universal Worker Registration – All 500+ million Indian workers to be registered and covered under a unified labour database.

Social Security Portability – Seamless transfer of benefits for migrant and gig workers across states and sectors.

Workplace Safety – AI-based monitoring and predictive safety analytics to achieve near-zero fatalities in hazardous sectors.

Gender Inclusion – Target to raise female labour force participation to 35% by 2030 (from current 24%) through gender-responsive policies.

Reduction in Informality – Digitization and compliance reforms to bring informal workers into formal frameworks.

Green and Decent Jobs – Promotion of sustainable livelihoods aligned with India's Just Transition and Net Zero 2070 commitments.

Integrated Workforce Ecosystem – Realization of the "One Nation, Integrated Workforce" vision with universal coverage and accountability.

Policy Loopholes and Challenges

1. Fragmented Implementation – Risk of poor coordination among Centre, States, and local bodies due to capacity and funding gaps. Requires inter-agency collaboration and strong institutional monitoring at all levels.

2. Digital Divide and Accessibility – Overreliance on AI and digital systems could exclude workers lacking access to internet or smartphones. Rural, female, and informal workers remain vulnerable unless supported with digital literacy and local facilitation.

3. Gig and Platform Workers – Although acknowledged, policy lacks clarity on –

1. Contribution models for social security.
2. Dispute resolution mechanisms.
3. Employer accountability in platform-based work arrangements.

4. Quality vs Quantity of Jobs – Focus is skewed towards job numbers rather than decent work conditions. No clear strategy for wage growth, skill premium, or occupational safety in emerging sectors.

5. Monitoring and Accountability Gaps – Third-party audit mechanisms not fully institutionalized. Real-time dashboards may face data accuracy and privacy challenges without legal safeguards.

6. Aspirational Gender Targets – The goal of 35% female labour participation may remain unattainable without –

1. Affordable childcare infrastructure.
2. Workplace safety and gender sensitivity protocols.
3. Flexible work arrangements and re-entry programs.

Strategic Significance

Economic Growth and Inclusion – A unified and digitally governed labour market will increase productivity, transparency, and welfare access.

Alignment with Global Goals – Supports SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) through inclusive employment.

Institutional Transformation – Strengthens India's position as a leader in labour market modernization among developing economies.

Support for "Amrit Kaal" Vision – Forms a cornerstone in India's journey towards Viksit Bharat @2047, where work is dignified, secure, and future-ready.

Conclusion and Way Forward

Shram Shakti Niti 2025 marks a paradigm shift from welfare-centric labour policies to rights-based, technology-enabled labour governance.

Success depends on –

1. Effective Centre–State coordination,
2. Bridging the digital divide,
3. Empowering local labour institutions, and
4. Ensuring inclusive social protection for gig, migrant, and informal workers.

With robust monitoring, policy coherence, and gender-responsive design, India can achieve a digitally integrated, equitable, and future-ready labour ecosystem by 2047.

Source – <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/draft-labour-policy-proposes-to-integrate-all-social-security-schemes/article70140320.ece>