400 mn Indian workers to face poverty: ILO

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-III- Economy-Labour

The impact of COVID-19 is gaining momentum on the negative front. In order to prevent coronavirus spread and to save lives our Indian economy has put lockdown in the whole nation which is adversely affecting the market and labour specially in the unorganized sectors.

Recently the International Labour Organization (ILO) has released a report titled ‘ILO Monitor 2nd edition: COVID-19 and the world of work- Updated estimates and analysis’ which has also stated that about 400 million people working in the informal economy in India are at risk of falling deeper into poverty due to the coronavirus crisis. Current lockdown measures in India are at the high end of the University of Oxford’s COVID-19 Government Response Stringency Index, which have forced many of the workers to return to rural areas. This report is a follow-up of first edition of the ILO Monitor regarding COVID-19.

- On the global front, employment losses are rising rapidly as there are two billion people working in the informal sector (mostly in emerging and developing economies).
- As of April 1, 2020, ILO’s new global estimated that there are chances of expulsion of 195 million full-time jobs or 6.7% of working hours globally in the second quarter of 2020.

Key Points from ILO Report:

- The coronavirus pandemic is the worst global crisis since World War II. Four out of five people (81%) in the global workforce of 3.3 billion are currently affected by full or partial workplace closures.

- Along with India, the number of workers in the informal economy of Nigeria and Brazil are also facing the same crisis due to lockdown.

- Most affected region: Arab States are facing severe decline in the working hours and employment with 8.1% reduction in working hours which is equivalent to 5 million full-time workers. These are followed by Europe (7.8%, or 12 million full-time workers) and Asia and the Pacific (7.2%, 125 million full-time workers).

- Most affected income group: Huge losses are expected across different income groups but especially in upper-middle income countries (7.0%, 100 million full-time workers).

- Most affected sectors: Sectors which are at high risk are Accommodation and food services, Real estate; business and administrative activities, Manufacturing, and Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles.

Measures needed to revive the COVID-19 impact; focused on 4 pillars

The tragic situations facing by the workers and businesses in both developed and developing economies need urgent measures for revival through international cooperation. As per report large-scale, integrated, policy measures were needed, focusing on four pillars:
• Supporting enterprises, employment and incomes
• Stimulating the economy and jobs
• Protecting workers in the workplace
• Using social dialogue between government, workers and employers to find solutions

PT PICKSUP

About International Labour Organization (ILO)

- International Labour Organization (ILO) is a United Nations agency dealing with labour issues, particularly international labour standards, social protection, and work opportunities for all.
- ILO was created in 1919, as part of the Treaty of Versailles that ended World War I, to reflect the belief that universal and lasting peace can be accomplished only if it is based on social justice. It became a specialized agency of the United Nations in 1946.
- It is a tripartite organization, the only one of its kind bringing together representatives of governments, employers and workers in its executive bodies.
- Since 1919, the International Labour Organization has maintained and developed a system of international labour standards aimed at promoting opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work, in conditions of freedom, equity, security and dignity.
- In 1969, ILO received the Nobel Peace Prize for improving fraternity and peace among nations, pursuing decent work and justice for workers, and providing technical assistance to other developing nations.
- India is a founder member of the International Labour Organization.
- The Headquarters of ILO is in Geneva, Switzerland.

In NEWS

In 2019, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the UN specialized agency celebrates its 100th anniversary.

- In the run up to the anniversary seven Centenary Initiatives are being implemented as part of a package of activities aimed at equipping the Organization to take up successfully the challenges of its social justice mandate in the future.

Seven Centenary Initiatives

- The future of work initiative: Initiating and cultivating a global dialogue on the future of work, to build the ILO’s ability to prepare and guide governments, workers and employers to better meet the world of work challenges of the next century.
- The end to poverty initiative: Promoting a multidimensional response through the world of work, labor markets, and social and employment protection to eradicate global poverty.
- The women at work initiative: Reviewing the place and conditions of women in the world of work and engaging workers, employers and governments in concrete action to realize equality of opportunity and treatment.
- The green initiative: Scaling up the ILO’s office-wide knowledge, policy advice and tools
for managing a just transition to a low carbon, sustainable future.

- **The standards initiative**: Enhancing the relevance of international labour standards through a standards review mechanism and consolidating tripartite consensus on an authoritative supervisory system.
- **The enterprises initiative**: Establishing a platform for ILO engagement with enterprises which would contribute to their sustainability and to ILO goals.
- **The governance initiative**: Reforming the ILO’s governance structures, assessing the impact of the 2008 Declaration as set out in its final provisions, and act on its finding.

**Eight Core International Labour Organisation (ILO) Conventions**

- **India** has **ratified six out of the eight core/fundamental ILO Conventions**. These are
  - Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29),
  - Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105),
  - Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100),
  - Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111),
  - Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) and
  - Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182).

- **India has not ratified** the core/fundamental Conventions, namely **Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87)** and **Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98)**.

- The main reason for non-ratification of ILO Conventions No.87 & 98 is **due to certain restrictions imposed on the Government servants**.

- The ratification of these conventions would involve granting of certain rights that are prohibited under the statutory rules, for the Government employees, namely, to strike work, to openly criticize Government policies, to freely accept financial contribution, to freely join foreign organizations etc.

- In **India Convention is ratified only when the national laws are brought fully into conformity with the provisions of the Convention**.

- Ratification of ILO Convention is a voluntary process and no time frame has been agreed for the same.

**About ILO:**
It is a specialized agency of the United Nations (UN).

**Establishment**– 1919

**Member States**– 187 (including India)

**Director General**– Guy Ryder

**Headquarter**– Geneve, Switzerland