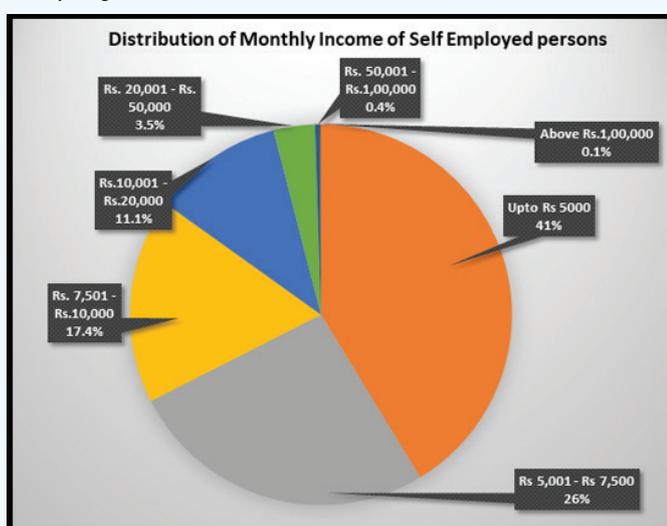


# Workers connect...

## Why Are The Self-Employed So Poor?

Self-employment is the buzz word today across the world. From the ubiquitous tea vendor on the street to persons providing various services through online portals, including couriers, taxis, food and grocery delivery, to home based workers in the beedi, papad and even garment industry are all considered self-employed. Two third of India's 98% informal workers are self-employed.



According to the Report of the Fifth Annual Employment-Unemployment Survey, 2016, of all persons engaged in the labour force, 46.6% were self-employed. If we look more closely into the self-employed category we find that more than 40% of self-employed persons have a monthly income less than Rs. 5000, and while more than 84% of self-employed persons earn less than Rs. 10,000 per month. These are our small and marginal farmers, street vendors, delivery workers, beedi workers, papad makers, home based garment workers, etc. with large number of them being women. International financial institutions since the 1990s have been aggressively advocating for this kind of 'entrepreneurship' of people as a solution for the unemployment and underemployment crisis in the global south. By dictionary definition, an entrepreneur is a person who sets up a business or businesses, taking on financial risks with the expectation of profit. But the disproportionate number of 'entrepreneurs' among the poor makes little sense. The poor

have little or no capital of their own, almost no access to credit, and they don't seem to be even making enough money to survive. Then why do the poor become entrepreneurs in our country and elsewhere too? They are self-employed not by choice but are self-employed because there are no jobs. According to some estimates about 12 million young people are set to enter the workforce every year over the next two decades and according to none other than the World Bank, India must create 8.1 million jobs a year to maintain its employment rate. The CMIE-BSE survey results show that employment has actually declined in the period January-April 2018 to 405 million as opposed to 401.7 million in January-April 2017.

### Are you a Worker or an Entrepreneur?

Coming back to the reluctant self-employed, we can divide them into two distinct categories: first, those who are definitely workers as defined by law and misrepresented as 'self-employed' and second, those who actually run a business on a very small scale, using mostly family labour, such as a street vendor, and located in the bracket of that 84% making barely Rs.10,000 a month.

According to the Industrial Disputes Act, 1948 and subsequent rulings of the Supreme Court expanding the definition, there are a few broad criteria that qualify a worker as a 'workman'.

One, **Who has Control:** A workman under the Industrial Disputes Act must be under the supervision, direction and control of their employer. A workman thus must not have the power to supervise, grant leave, initiate disciplinary actions against, conduct performance appraisals or hire or fire any other employee; or influence business decisions of the establishment.

And two, **What work do you do:** It does not matter what designation is given to a worker, what matters is the main tasks that they perform at their workplace. If the main or substantial task for which a worker is employed

is that of a 'workman' then designation or any incidental work done will not take the worker outside the purview of the ID Act.



So using these two broad parameters, we shall look at the following persons and classify

them as workmen or not.

A **home-based beedi worker** or a **garment worker** is often termed as self-employed 'entrepreneur' because she buys her raw material from someone, works on it and then sells it in the market at a mark-up. While on the face of things this is true, if we look closely, she is provided raw material by a fixed supplier, she is told how to produce, what to produce and in what quantity by the contractor, and she sells it back to the same contractor at a pre-fixed price. She is not free to buy her material from anywhere she wishes to. She is not free to sell what she produced to anybody she wishes to. She is not even free to produce as much as she wishes to. The size, the design, the quantity are all controlled by the contractor. In fact, it is not even the contractor who decides this. It is the final buyer of the products the worker produces who decides and controls all this. Although the worker may not know in many cases who they produce for, it is finally the owner of the company who sells the product who makes all the decisions. Thus, to many it may seem that the beedi or the garment worker is engaged in a business relation where she makes the decisions, in reality it is the buyer company that is responsible. The buyer company may be an enterprise that is located in our own country as in the case of a beedi manufacturer or may even be a Multinational garment company sourcing its products from across the world. The home-based worker is a necessary element of the supply chain of the company. Hence the beedi or the garment worker whether accepted by the company as a 'workman' or not, is a workman under the ID Act and is definitely not self-employed.

Moving to a different location and spectrum, we all have seen advertisements in newspapers

calling for people to apply as a **home-based data entry operator** and earn several thousand

rupees a month. A lot of young people apply for these positions in urban areas. Are these data entry operators self-employed? Most of the time the persons so employed tell us

that they work at their own pace, decide how much work they do and work when they want and don't work when they don't want to. That gives the impression that this person is free to do what she wants and when and how. However, once again, this is not entirely true. The work is strictly monitored, targets are fixed and the pay is piece rated and hence productivity linked. Thus the control of how much one works or not is determined by the entity that provides the work. Even if not visible, this entity decides and controls whether work should be given to this person, how she works, when she works and how much she works remotely through the pay structure. Visibility or in this case invisibility of an employer does not 'blur' the employment relation. The employment relation exists and if invisible it needs to be established, not given up.

The much debated issue today across the world is whether an Ola/Uber driver is an 'independent contractor'/'business partner' or a workman. Uber today is fighting in employment tribunals across the world to establish that the driver-owners are independent contractors/ business partners while the driver-owners have successfully established that they have a clear employer-employee relation with Uber. This is being challenged by Uber in courts of law as their entire profit model is based on this misrepresentation of reality. And this is not just for online taxi services such as Uber/Ola, it is also true for plumbers and electricians being provided by UrbanClap, or food being delivered by Swiggy and municipal safai workers in states like Uttar Pradesh. The Government of India has signed a MoU with UrbanClap to provide work to skilled workers from their Skill India programme. The argument placed before the London Employment Tribunal by the Uber

drivers through their trade union is that the allocation of work to a driver, the determination of route to be taken, the number of rides to be given, the pay and disciplinary action is all controlled by Uber and thus the employment contract as 'independent contractors' is a bogus contract. The fact that many drivers and such other workers in India continue to believe that they can stop working by simply switching off their device is again only an illusion. If this is done repeatedly and at the will of a worker, the company retaliates by taking punitive action by providing less work and hence less earning which then forces workers to follow the discipline of the device thereby establishing their control over the work relation.

And finally let us examine the much celebrated 'chaiwalla' or the 'pakodawalla' or our familiar 'thelawalla' selling vegetables in our locality, be it urban or rural. The number of people



dependent on such livelihoods is very high in our country and is growing too. Development perceived as a process of transition from informal relations to a 'modern' state with formal contracts, has

moved backwards. The existence and profitability of existing businesses in the globalised world is intrinsically linked to the existence of this informal economy. There is no compartmentalised informal and formal today. The formal exists and owes its stability to the existence and instability of the informal.

On one hand, let us consider a contract worker in a multinational pharma or engineering company living in the city of Pune or even in Baddi in Himachal Pradesh. He is able to survive at the minimum wage because he buys his vegetables from the local *thelawala*, eats his tiffin at the *chaiwalla* next to his factory gate and buys his clothes from the local weekly bazaar. Also at each buy, he tries to bargain down the price to suit his pocket. This informal market ensures his survival. Now in this relation, let us consider the *chaiwalla*, or the *thelawalla*. His work relation differs from the contract worker. The *chaiwalla* has to pay rent

or protection money (*hafta*) for putting his stall where he is, whether legally or extra-legally, in every transaction he also has to bargain to retain his price, sometimes he wins sometimes he doesn't but he accepts it to retain his client, and finally he has to pay for the labour that he (and in some cases other members of family) put during the day. What therefore happens in reality is that after paying off the rent and covering the costs of production, if the *chaiwalla* is able to make some earning, he sees that as his profit. Thus if the rent per day is Rs. 100, the cost of tea, milk, sugar and fuel is Rs. 500, and the *chaiwalla* makes Rs. 700 in a day, he thinks this Rs. 100 is his profit. But this is not his profit. He has ignored the fact that he has worked for more than 8 hours in the day for which he has not paid himself a wage. If he had to pay a worker at this establishment at the minimum wage, he would have to pay Rs. 300 but since he hired no one he did not have to pay. Hence this mode of production allows for intensive exploitation of the entire family (sometimes even child labour) at sites where the state does not intervene. Here the surplus is extracted through more than just the wage-profit route as in the case of wage labour. This person is not an entrepreneur and neither is he wage labour. In fact he is engaged in self-exploitation to subsidise the formal sector. And if we now go back to the fact that more than 84% of the self-employed in our country earn less than Rs.10,000 things start making sense. Through self-employment employers at the end of the supply chain are able to extract much more than even through wage labour. Keeping a large section of people in the self-employment trap is essential to extracting profit beyond what is possible through a wage-profit route.

The largely elite argument that people choose self-employment as it provides flexibility, autonomy and allows a work life balance may have some element of truth for the top 1% of the self-employed but definitely not for this 84% of the self-employed. They would happily give up being an 'entrepreneur' and would like to have a job with a stable wage, social security, with weekly off, annual pay, maternity leave and other benefits. These 'entrepreneurs' are among the over 280 lakh persons who applied at the Indian Railways for the 90,000 vacancies this year.

## Policy News

### **Cabinet approves 2% hike in DA and DR of central government employees and pensioners**

29 August 2018: The union government has cleared an additional 2% hike in dearness allowance (DA) and dearness relief (DR) of employees and pensioners respectively, with effect from 1 July 2018. The increase has been sanctioned in accordance with the recommendations of the Seventh Pay Commission. The hike would benefit about 4.84 million employees and 6.2 million pensioners of the central government.

### **Odisha: ASHA worker's one-time honorarium hiked**

10 August 2018: Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) worker's one-time honorarium has been raised from existing Rs.10,000 to Rs.20,000. ASHA workers will receive the honorarium amount under Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) after completing at least 10 years of service or on retirement at the age of 62.

Government has also offered additional financial assistance of Rs.10,000 for purchasing essentials such as umbrella, shoe, cycle, almirah and torchlight. The hike will benefit around 47,000 ASHA workers employed by the state.

## Legal News

### **Delhi High Court sets aside notification which raised Minimum Wages in the state**

4 August 2018: A bench of Acting Chief Justice Geeta Mittal and Justice C Hari Shankar, while hearing the plea of employer's association bodies set aside the March, 2017 Minimum Wage notification of Delhi government which had led to around 50% hike in the wages of workers.

The bench observed that the Minimum Wage Committee did not have adequate representation of employers and employer bodies, did not follow lawful procedures and acted in haste in raising minimum wages.

The incumbent government has decided that it will follow minimum wages notified by the Centre, rather than reverting the wages to the old rates which are considerably lower than the wages notified in March last year.

## Collective bargaining

### **Tamil Nadu: Around 600 workers go on indefinite strike at automotive manufacturing company Pricol**

30 August 2018: More than 600 workers went on indefinite strike on 21 August 2018 under the banner of Kovai Mavatta Pricol Thozhilalar Sangam (KMPTS) affiliated to AICCTU at the Coimbatore factory of Pricol demanding:

- Withdrawal of the illegal partial lock out against 143 workers.
- Secret ballot elections to determine the majority union at the plant.
- Immediate stop on the punishments, victimisation and denial of allowances/dues to all workers.

The lock-out of 143 workers is the management offensive to union's demand of starting wage negotiations since the old agreement lapsed earlier this year and a new one ought to have come into effect from July 2018. However, the management has been abstaining from all negotiations with the KMPTS union.

### **Employees at state run ports win 10.6% wage hike**

30 August 2018: The shipping ministry signed a new wage settlement agreement with employees at government run ports, under which workers and pensioners will receive a 10.6% hike in their basic and dearness allowance for a five-year period starting January 2017.

Around 32000 workers and 1.05 lakh pensioners will benefit from the new wage agreement.

### **Chhattisgarh: JK Paper Mill contract workers go on indefinite strike after management ignores 14-point charter of demands**

26 August 2018: More than 4000 contract workers employed at JK Paper Mill's Rayagada plant in Chhattisgarh went on indefinite strike pressing that management consider their 14-point charter of demand which includes rise in wages and allowances, regularisation of services of workers who have worked for more than 10 years and 10-day annual leave for women employees. Contract workers were forced to strike after management kept ignoring workers' request regarding negotiation on the charter of demands for the

last four months.

The management had earlier approached the High Court for a restraining order against the protesting workers. The High Court ordered against the management upholding workers' right to peaceful protest.

### ***Air India pays allowance to pilots after union threatens to strike***

***22 August 2018:*** After the Indian Commercial Pilot's Association (ICPA) threatened the Air India management that pilots and cabin crew would report to the office for desk jobs, but abstain from flying duties if their flying allowances are not paid, the management jumped into action and cleared the dues for the month of June for all pilots and cabin crew on 20 August 2018.

Basic wage constitutes only 30% of the total earnings of the pilots and cabin crew workers whose main earnings comes from flying and other allowances. In the last six months, payment of wages and allowances of flying staff has been irregular due to Airline's poor performance.

### ***Telangana: Emergency Medical Technicians and Ambulance drivers approach Labour Department against GVK-EMRI management***

***20 August 2018:*** Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) and Ambulance drivers employed on contract by the GVK-EMRI 108 Emergency services have raised a dispute with the Labour Department against illegal termination of services of 620 workers.

GVK-EMRI has been terminating workers in batches since the worker's union put forth the demand to cut down working hours of EMTs and ambulance drivers from the existing 12 hours to 8 hours and regular payment of wages.

### ***West Bengal: Tea Plantation workers go on a three-day strike demanding wage hike***

***09 August 2018:*** More than 4 lakh tea plantation workers from around 370 tea plantations across the North Bengal region went on three-day strike beginning 07 August 2018 demanding a 20% hike in wages.

In 2014, 19 major trade unions came together to form an umbrella body demanding that the old system of negotiating wages every three years, prevalent since 1977, be discontinued

and replaced with Minimum Wages Act for determining wages in tea plantations. The West Bengal government formed a wage committee in 2016 to look into the matter which has failed to reach a consensus ever since.

Currently, the minimum daily wage for a worker at the plantation is Rs.159, which includes a cash component along with payment in kind such as housing, ration, firewood etc., the unions have been demanding that the wages be raised to Rs.203. Meanwhile, succumbing to the protest WB government has proposed an interim wage hike to Rs. 176.

### ***Maharashtra: Government Hospital staff hold three-day protest, demand filling of vacancies and a five-day work week***

***07 August 2018:*** Workers employed in Class III and Class IV employment, attached to state run hospitals went on a three-day strike starting 07 August 2018 demanding implementation of the Seventh Pay Commission, increase in retirement age to 60 from 58, filling of vacancies, jobs for children or spouse in the event of husband's death while on duty, promotion based on further education, and five-day work week. Around 10 lakh workers who are employed in Class III and IV employment in the state participated in the strike.

## ***Discrimination***

### ***Karnataka: Hindustan Aeronautics Limited files case against protesting workers***

***30 August 2018:*** The Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) has filed a FIR against the members of Hindustan Aeronautics Employees Association for staging a protest over wage-related issues on 23 August 2018. The management in it FIR has claimed that the protest was in violation of an injunction order by the court which prohibited the workers from staging any protest. Police has registered the FIR and summoned the office-bearers of the association under the charges of wrongful restraint and unlawful assembly.

### ***Maharashtra: University of Mumbai fails to make PF contribution of contract staff for 7 years***

***28 August 2018:*** The University of Mumbai which employs more than 1200 non-teaching staff on contract basis, has failed to pay their PF arrears since 2009. The Employees Provident

Fund Organisation has sent notice to the university demanding records of the contract workers who have raised a dispute through their union, the Mumbai University Kaamgar Sangathana.

Workers have also raised a demand of regularisation of their services as more than 300 permanent posts are lying vacant at the varsity which has created only 8 permanent posts in the last 30 years.

### **Odisha: Stevedoring workers denied work for demanding an 8-hour work day**

**27 August 2018:** Employees of Odisha Stevedores Limited (OSL) went on a two-day strike at Paradeep under the banner of OSL Shramik Sangathan demanding fulfilment of their 13-point charter which includes demands for better wages and lowering of working hours which currently stretch up to 18 hours a day.

In retaliation OSL management filed FIR against protesting workers and denied gate passes to more than 300 workers denying them work the following day.

## **In and Around**

### **World Bank report finds two-thirds of Indian workers earn less because of childhood stunting**

**17 August 2018:** A report of the World Bank co-authored by Emanuela Galasso and Adam Wagstaff has found that 66% of Indian workers, third highest in the world were stunted as children. India is preceded by Bangladesh and Afghanistan, where 73% and 67% workers showed stunted growth respectively.

The report pointed out that children who have stunted growth suffer from impaired brain development, which leads to lower cognitive and socio-emotional skills and lower levels of educational attainment. Lack of these skills has resulted in 66 percent of the Indian workforce earning less than it would otherwise have.

According to the report mean reduction in income for South Asians was 10 percent, compared to North America's 2 percent. For countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, and East Asia and Pacific, the mean reduction rate was found to be 9 and 7 percent, respectively.

## **Workplace Safety Watch**

On 19 August, 6 workers Jagjeet Singh, Manjeet Singh, Rameshwar Mukhia, Raghbir Singh, Ranbir Singh and Harpreet Singh died and 7 others were gravely injured when a 30 foot high wall of a under-construction rice sheller collapsed at Fatehgarh Sahib, Chandigarh, Punjab. The police have booked the owners of the sheller, Rajesh Kumar and Himanshu Bansal, and contractor Avtar Singh under Section 304 of the Indian Penal Code.

Sumesh (30) a contract worker from Bihar died after falling from the roof of Platform no.4 of St. Thomas Mount railway station in Chennai, Tamil Nadu on 25 August. Sumesh was hired for removing the asbestos sheets from the roof through a contractor and not provided any safety equipment. Police has registered a case of accidental fall.

### **Sanitation**

Onkur Ramesh (58), a sanitation worker with the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) died on 29 August when he was run over by a lorry, while on duty at Kattedan, Hyderabad, Telangana.

### **Manufacturing**

On 1 August, 2 contract workers, Balasubramanian (38) and Jaishankar (27) of Sterlite were injured due to leakage of sulphuric acid during routine evacuation of acids at the sealed copper plant at Tuticorin, Tamil Nadu. Sterlite employs 200 contract workers for evacuating acids, inflammable materials and raw materials at the Tuticorin plant.

The police have registered a case against the contractor Premkumar and 2 supervisors Ilavarasan and Muthuram of a private company for negligence causing danger to life under IPC sections 285, 286, 287 and 337.

A. Kannan (27) died in a fire that broke out in an illegal aluminium powder manufacturing unit in West Amathur, Virudhunagar, Tamil Nadu on 8 August. The small-scale unit was used for converting aluminium scrap into aluminium powder which is used in manufacturing of explosives. Owner of the factory Arun Shankar is on the run.

### **Others**

On 3 August, 12 workers were killed and several

others sustained severe burn injuries in a major blast at the Sri Vigneswara Stone Crushing Unit, a granite quarry at Kurnool, Andhra Pradesh. The quarry has been operating on lease for the last eight years and employs around 35 workers, mostly migrants from Bihar, Odisha and Chhattisgarh. The blast occurred after gelatine sticks used to blast granite, stored in a shack near the temporary shelters of workers, exploded. It has become difficult to ascertain the identity of the workers due to the severity of the burns.

Gopinath, Sub-Inspector, Alur; K Natarajan, Assistant Director, Mines; C Srinivasulu, Revenue Officer, Alur and Nagaraju, Tahsildar, Alur have been suspended for negligence and complicity in allowing illegal quarrying. Police has arrested the owner of the quarry Srinivasa Chowdary, unit manager B Ramesh, supervisor Mahabub Basha, labor contractors Kailash and Syamla Sahu and explosive in-charge B Narayanappa.

## Health and Safety

### ***Karnataka: Garment factory shuts down as workers fall sick after drinking contaminated water***

**17 August 2018:** Over 150 workers employed at the Wonder Blues garment factory, Mysuru Road, Bangalore had to be rushed to hospitals due to dysentery and vomiting after they drank contaminated water from the water tanks at the factory. Wonder Blues is a tier-2 supplier for global garment brands like GAP and H&M.

The State Surveillance Unit, Department of Health and Family Welfare has collected samples from the water purifier tank and canteen and ordered that the company remain shut till the cause of the infection is ascertained and the company ensures proper corrective action.

### ***Maharashtra: Fire at Bharat Petroleum Plant in Mumbai leaves 41 workers injured***

**8 August 2018:** Fire and explosion in Hydrocarbon plant containing 72 ton hydrocarbon used for diesel generation in the Cracking Vacuum Gas Oil and Hydrocarbon unit on 8 August 2018 resulted in injuries to 41 workers and caused damage to nearby plants and adjacent housing blocks.

All plants had to be depressurised and shut down to prevent a chain blast. Mono Rail services had to be stopped and nearby housing colonies vacated due to the massive build-up of toxic gases in the area.

## News from around the World

### ***US: Court strikes down executive orders which would have eased hire and fire of federal staff***

**25 August 2018:** U.S. District Court Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson struck down those provisions of the Trump administration's workforce executive orders, which were aimed to ease hire and fire of federal staff concluding that they conflicted with the 1978 Civil Service Reform Act.

In May, 2018 President Trump had issued three executive orders, the first of which sought to standardize the length of performance improvement plans at 30 days government wide and exempt adverse personnel actions from grievance proceedings. Another sought to streamline collective bargaining negotiations, and the third order aimed to significantly reduce the number of work hours union members can spend on official time as well as the activities that are eligible for the practice.

More than 12 unions appealed against the executive orders in the Court. The Court held that collective bargaining is an act of good-faith for public good and can not be curbed. Further, the judge held that the executive orders were in violation of Civil Service Reform Act, 1978 and that the law precludes the president from weighing in on collective bargaining altogether.

### ***US: Uber to pay \$10 million in damages to workers for racial discrimination and harassment***

**22 August 2018:** In a case pertaining to 2017 taxi aggregator service Uber has agreed to pay 56 current and former employees about \$33,900 each, or \$1.9 million, to settle their claims of gender discrimination, harassment and hostile work environment.

In addition to the \$1.9 million, another \$5.1 million will be divided among more than 480 workers, including the 56 who are receiving compensation in other matters.

The lawsuit was filed against Uber in October

2017 by three female Latina employees working as engineers who were being paid less than their white or Asian male colleagues. The petitioners were victim of Uber's discriminatory 'stack ranking' system, which undervalued work of female employees and employees of colour, systematically and led to lower pay because of average, lower rankings despite equal or better performance.

In July, 2018 Uber's head of HR resigned following an internal investigation on her handling of racial discrimination claims.

### ***US & Canada: Inmates stage nationwide prison labour strike over 'modern slavery'***

**21 August 2018:** Around 2.3 million people incarcerated across United States of America and Canada are on a 19-day strike starting 21 August 2018 demanding an immediate end to imposed labour in return for paltry wages. More than 800,000 prisoners are daily put to work in the US, in most states compulsorily, in roles such as cleaning, cooking and lawn mowing. The remuneration for this forced work is as low as 4 cents per hour in some states.

Jailhouse Lawyers Speak, a collective of prisoners which is spearheading the strike has put forth a 10 point nationwide charter of demands which includes improved prison conditions, an end to life without parole sentences, increased funding for rehabilitation services and an end to the disenfranchisement of around 6 million citizens with felony convictions who are barred from voting. Prisoners from Canada have joined the strike call and added their demands to the 10-point charter.

Inmates have been refusing work, holding sit-ins and staging hunger strikes across the two nations.

### ***Italy: Government promulgates law to curb temporary job contracts***

**7 August 2018:** Italy has brought in legislation which increases costs for firms that use temporary work contracts and reduces the number of times such temporary contracts can be renewed to a maximum of two years from three. The move is aimed at curbing the rise in precarious jobs in the country which has been facing economic crisis for over half-a-decade now. Recent figures show that last year 394,000

temporary jobs were created while the number of permanent jobs declined by 83,000.

The law also has provisions for recalling monies and imposing fines on firms that receive state financial support or tax breaks and then move their production abroad, in order to retain jobs within the country.

### ***Ireland: Court awards €7500 to worker for dealing with work emails after working hours***

**2 August 2018:** Gráinne O'Hara an employee of the meat producer company, Kepak Convenience Foods Unlimited Co has been awarded €7,500 for being required to deal with out-of-hours work emails, including some after midnight, that led to work in excess of 48 hours a week.

The Court held that replying to work emails after working hours amounted to overtime work and violated the Organisation of Working Time Act.

## ***Corporate Watch***

### ***Sore in the eyes of automobile companies – Unions***

A US court imposed a fine of \$835 million dollars on Alphons Iacobelli, Vice President, Employee Relations at Fiat Chrysler Automobiles. Alphons Iacobelli was found guilty of bribing union officials on behalf of his employer to obtain concessions and advantages and lowering benefits in collective bargaining agreements, along with charges of tax evasion.

Automobile companies across the globe are infamous for their efforts to stifle worker's Right to Freedom of Association. In June, 2018 a worker from Elon Musk's electric car company Tesla had testified that Musk threatened workers at the shop-floor and fired at least 3 worker who had complained of poor working conditions and tried forming a union at the Tesla-3 plant.

In India, when workers of the largest car manufacturer company Maruti-Suzuki tried to register a union of their choice at the Manesar plant, they were framed on false charges of murder and setting the factory to fire in 2012. Court acquitted more than 300 workers in the case as police failed to produce any evidence to substantiate its claims.