

Fairwork Pakistan Ratings 2023

Fairwork Pakistan has rated six digital labour platforms in Pakistan along five principles of fair work. Of these six platforms, four are in ride-hailing (Bykea, Careem, inDrive, and Uber), one in food delivery services (Foodpanda), and one is in professional beauty services (GharPar). Careem, Foodpanda, inDrive and Uber operate internationally, and Bykea and GharPar are homegrown startups. Bykea is a hybrid or mixed platform providing both ride-hailing and parcel delivery services.

The geographical focus of this work is the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi where the data was collected from platform workers during interviews in March and April 2023.

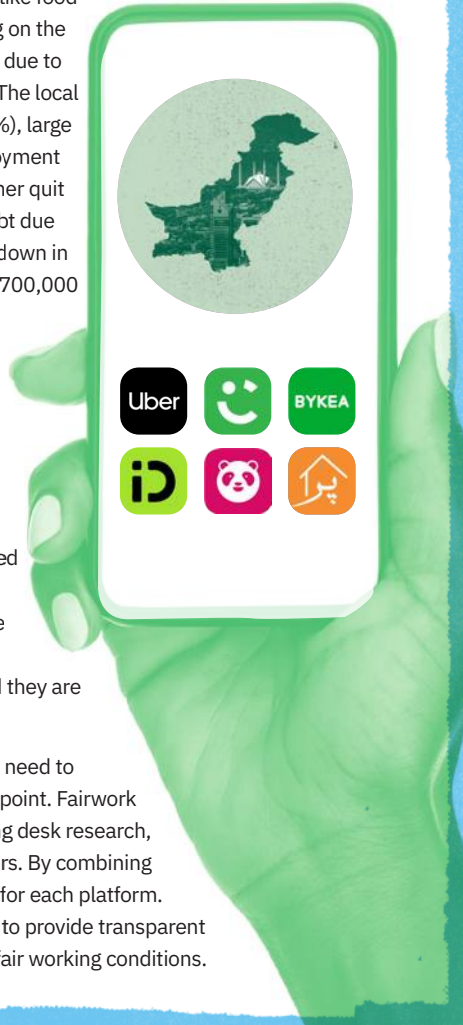
During the last one and a half years, the number of digital labour platforms in Pakistan has shrunk instead of multiplying, leading to a situation of monopsony in markets like food delivery as well as ride hailing. Pakistan's economy is teetering on the brink of default, though the crisis is seemingly averted for now due to IMF package of 3 billion USD, payable over next nine months. The local platform economy is situated in crippling inflation (around 38%), large informal economy (above 80%) and increasing youth unemployment (around 30%). The situation is leading platform workers to either quit the platform work or incur losses and accumulate platform debt due to negative incomes. The government's four-day internet shutdown in May 2023 severely impacted the livelihoods of approximately 700,000 location-based platform workers in Pakistan.

What are the Fairwork ratings?

Fairwork is an international research project that assesses the working conditions of platforms across 38 countries. The Fairwork Pakistan ratings are developed by a team of local experts at the Centre for Labour Research Pakistan.

Fairwork assigns ratings to platforms on a scale of 0 to 10 based on five principles of platform work: fair pay, fair conditions, fair contracts, fair management, and fair representation. These principles have been developed through collaboration with workers, unions, policymakers, platforms, and academics, and they are regularly updated to ensure relevance.

Each principle is further divided into two points, and platforms need to demonstrate compliance with specific requirements to earn a point. Fairwork adopts a three-fold approach to develop these scores, involving desk research, interviews with workers, and interviews with platform managers. By combining evidence from these sources, Fairwork determines the scores for each platform. Through its comprehensive evaluation process, Fairwork aims to provide transparent and reliable ratings that reflect the adherence of platforms to fair working conditions.



Fairwork Pakistan Scores 2023

Minimum standards
of fair work

Bykea 0 /10 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Careem 0 /10 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Foodpanda 0 /10 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

GharPar 0 /10 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

inDrive 0 /10 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Uber 0 /10 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

THE BREAKDOWN OF SCORES FOR INDIVIDUAL PLATFORMS CAN BE SEEN ON
OUR WEBSITE:

FAIRWORK/PAKISTAN

Key Findings



FAIR PAY

None of the platforms we assessed provided evidence that workers earn above the prescribed minimum wage of PKR 28,253 per month or PKR 136 per hour in 2023. Given the ever-increasing travel expenses and vehicle maintenance costs, there was no evidence that any of the six platforms met the minimum wage threshold after considering necessary expenses. Fairwork Pakistan found no platform guaranteeing a minimum living wage — PKR 42,728 per month or PKR 205 per hour in 2023 for platform workers.



FAIR CONDITIONS

The six assessed platforms lack proper safety measures, inadequate safety training and limited access to necessary equipment like helmets and jackets, often requiring workers to pay. The platforms' efforts to address lone working risks were limited. Emergency buttons or helplines are provided, but awareness regarding these is limited. Moreover, the workers we spoke to reported mixed experiences and doubts about the effectiveness of emergency buttons and helplines. Crucially, risks to workers' physical and mental health were largely unaddressed, as there were no provisions for rest areas, access to toilets, or food/snacks. There was limited awareness among workers about accidental insurance programs, with instances of denied claims or unpaid payouts.



FAIR CONTRACT

Platform contracts pose challenges with insufficient notification, inaccessible terms, and inadequate adjustment time for workers, while also hindering redress through liability-absolving clauses and lacking transparency in payment calculations. A prevailing cause of concern is that workers are not adequately notified within a reasonable timeframe about proposed changes to fares, fare calculation methods, rating systems, and other policies that directly impact their daily work on the app.



FAIR MANAGEMENT

The assessed platforms meet basic requirements by offering accessible communication channels and live chat support for issue resolution, along with an appeals process that encourages workers to address concerns without penalties. What all of them lacked was that the channels for communication and the appeal process were not explicitly documented in the contract or Terms and Conditions, missing the score.



FAIR REPRESENTATION

Despite the increasing (but still sporadic) occurrence of platform worker organisation throughout the country, more evidence is needed that platforms are willing to acknowledge or engage with a collective body of workers. We could not identify any platform that met the criteria for this principle, indicating a disregard for the importance of organised representation in fostering fair working conditions.

While there have been a few instances of worker's collective action such as Bykea workers demanding the reintroduction of bonuses and Careem workers successfully advocating for lower weight limits for parcels and the ability to remove negative ratings—these cases are limited.

Regulating for a Fairer Platform Economy

During the last two years, the Centre for Labour Research and the Fairwork have been working on a draft bill (**Islamabad Capital Territory Platform Workers Protection Bill, 2023**) for regulating platform work with the aim to promote fairness, transparency, and worker well-being while ensuring a level playing field for platforms.

The Centre of Labour Research collaborated with various stakeholders to refine the proposed draft aiming for a comprehensive and equitable version to balance the interests of platforms and workers through fostering innovation and protecting the rights of platform workers. Valuable inputs from trade unions, government representatives, ILO country office, and independent experts were considered to strike a balance between worker interests and responsible platform practices.

The draft bill proposed by the Centre for Labour Research gives platform workers all workplace rights and covers all Fairwork principles:

Fair Pay (the right to a minimum wage, working hour restrictions, and premium wage payments for work on rest days and public holidays, during night hours and inclement weather)

Fair Conditions (health and safety protection of platform workers including heat action plans, right to various kinds of leave including but not limited to annual leave, sick leave, maternity leave, plus social protection and various cash benefits from the IESSI and EOBI including old-age pensions and social security benefits, data protection and data portability rights)

Fair Contracts (right to comprehensible employment contracts, platforms to follow the labour legislation of their national jurisdiction, no exclusion of platform liability, information on dynamic pricing, notification to workers of any proposed changes in existing frameworks within reasonable timeframes)

Fair Management (grievance redressal mechanisms, protections from multiple forms of discrimination and harassment including sexual harassment, human oversight of all decisions that impact working conditions, transparency in decision-making systems, right to contest and appeal disciplinary actions)

Fair Representation (the right to unionise and bargain collectively, and provision for mandatory works council requiring social dialogue at the level of the platform).

The bill includes five-point criteria to determine whether a platform worker is engaged in an employment relationship with the digital labour platform. The proposed bill introduces a requirement for regular external audits by digital labour platforms to ensure fair and unbiased work allocation. These audits aim to promote transparency and equal opportunities for all workers. The draft bill also requires platforms to establish rest points and toilet facilities for workers, in coordination with the municipal administration.

The draft bill provides for establishment of Platform Worker Protection Council to monitor and oversee the protection of rights of platform workers in Islamabad Capital Territory. There is also a provision for a tripartite-plus Dispute Resolution Committee to ensure speedy resolution of workers' complaints.

For the detailed updated draft bill, please refer to the **Fairwork Pakistan Ratings 2023**.

Get involved!

Are you a platform worker or consumer?
Check out the resources and campaigns on our site

FAIR.WORK/ENGAGE

A COLLABORATION BETWEEN

