Society & Social Justice · GS - I

What is the ‘flexibility paradox’ in India's platform economy? Examine its implications for women's economic empowerment and suggest measures to address it.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 02/11/2026	GS - I	Society & Social Justice

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Platform economy; flexible working arrangements; unpaid care work; gender wage gap; algorithmic management; social security; digital inclusion; gender-sensitive labour policies

Model Answer

Introduction

The platform economy connects workers with customers through digital applications for services such as transportation, delivery and household assistance. Although flexible schedules can expand women's employment opportunities, flexibility does not necessarily ensure economic equality.

Understanding the Flexibility Paradox

1. Unequal Domestic Responsibilities

Women often shoulder a disproportionate share of unpaid care work. This can limit their availability during peak-demand periods and restrict access to higher-paying assignments.

2. Income and Employment Insecurity

Irregular working hours, fluctuating demand, platform commissions and limited bargaining power may result in unstable earnings. Safety concerns and the digital divide can further constrain participation.

3. Gender Equality Implications

Women may enter paid work without gaining equivalent financial independence, career progression or control over their working conditions.

Way Forward

Social-security coverage should be strengthened through applicable labour and social-security frameworks. Platforms should promote transparent allocation of assignments, fair remuneration, accessible grievance redressal and effective safety mechanisms. Affordable childcare, digital training and more equitable sharing of domestic responsibilities are also essential.

Conclusion

The platform economy can advance women's empowerment only when flexibility is accompanied by decent earnings, social protection, safety and equal opportunities.

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