A good gig? The rise of on-demand domestic work

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Why did we select research?

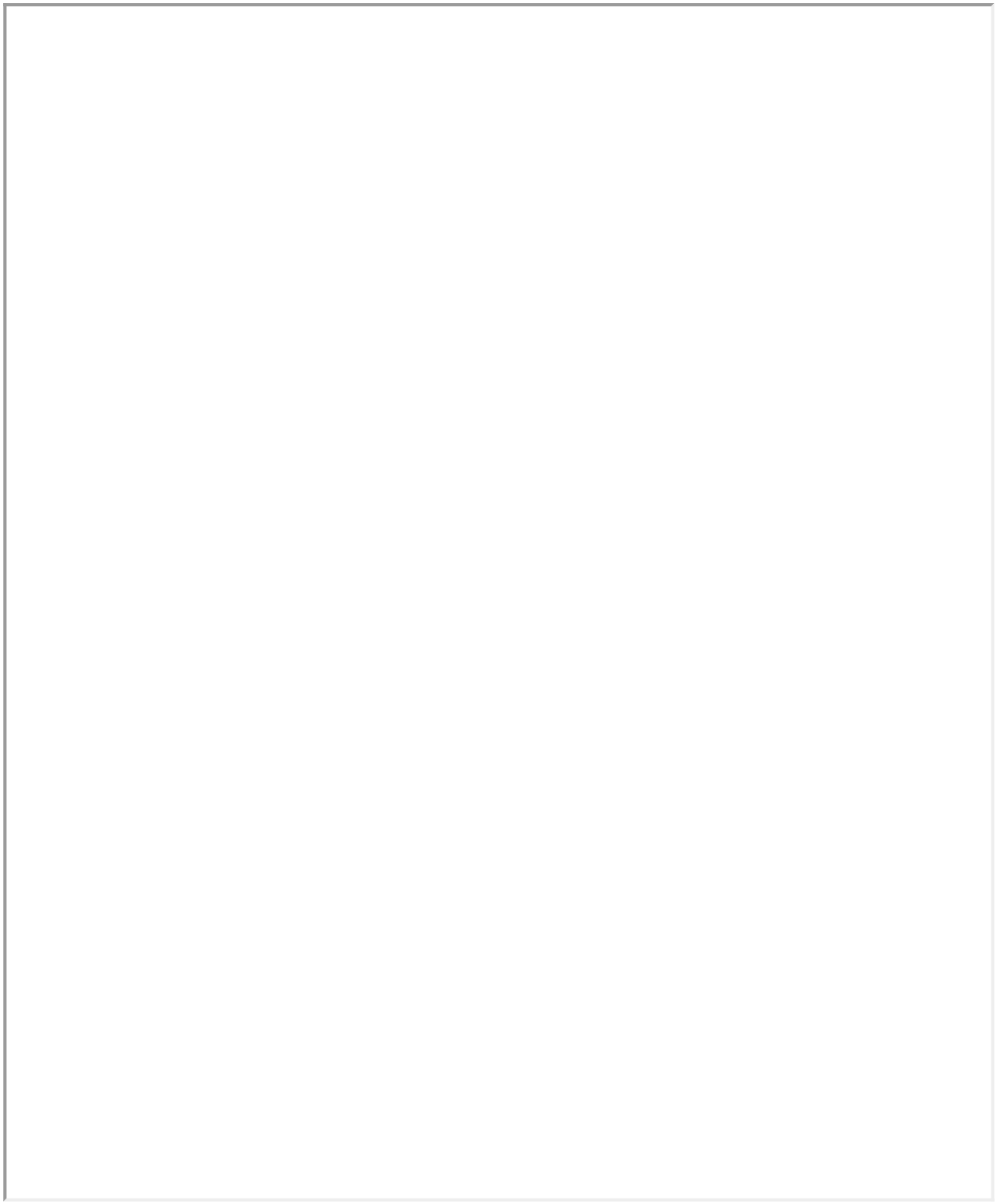
There are an estimated 67 million domestic workers globally, 80% of whom are women. Many of them work in low-paid, insecure and exploitative conditions. Technology-focused companies linking households to domestic workers through 'on-demand' platforms are attempting to disrupt the traditional sector, claiming to offer rapidly accessible, cheap domestic services to households, and flexible, well-remunerated economic opportunities to domestic workers. This paper presents a scoping study which explores the rise of on-demand domestic work platforms and the experiences of households and domestic workers using them.

Key Findings

- The on-demand economy for domestic work is growing rapidly in developing countries. The potential benefits and risks attached to this burgeoning area of domestic work may affect women disproportionately
- On-demand platforms offer some benefits to domestic workers, such as choice over working times, tracking of hours worked and wages earnt. And potentially better remuneration compared with other forms of domestic work
- The research identifies low and insecure incomes, discrimination, further entrenchment of unequal power relations within the traditional domestic work sector, and the erosion of established labour and social protections as key challenges

- On-demand companies have adapted to developing country contexts, notably by taking steps to engage workers by overcoming digital and financial divides

- The infancy of the on-demand domestic work economy in developing countries means it is not too late to raise standards. This will involve proactive efforts by companies to ‘design-in’ good practice, as well as by government to ensure an integrated future policy, legal, practice and research agenda.



Reference

Hunt, A. & Machingura, F. (2016) A good gig? The rise of on-demand domestic work.

https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/11155.pdf