

Social Protection and Career Development for Women Crowd Workers



What is Crowd Work?

Crowd Work: a job where workers search for clients who need their labor or service, receive orders of work from the clients, deliver the completed work or service to the clients, and receive wage from the clients through the intermediation of a web-based labor platform



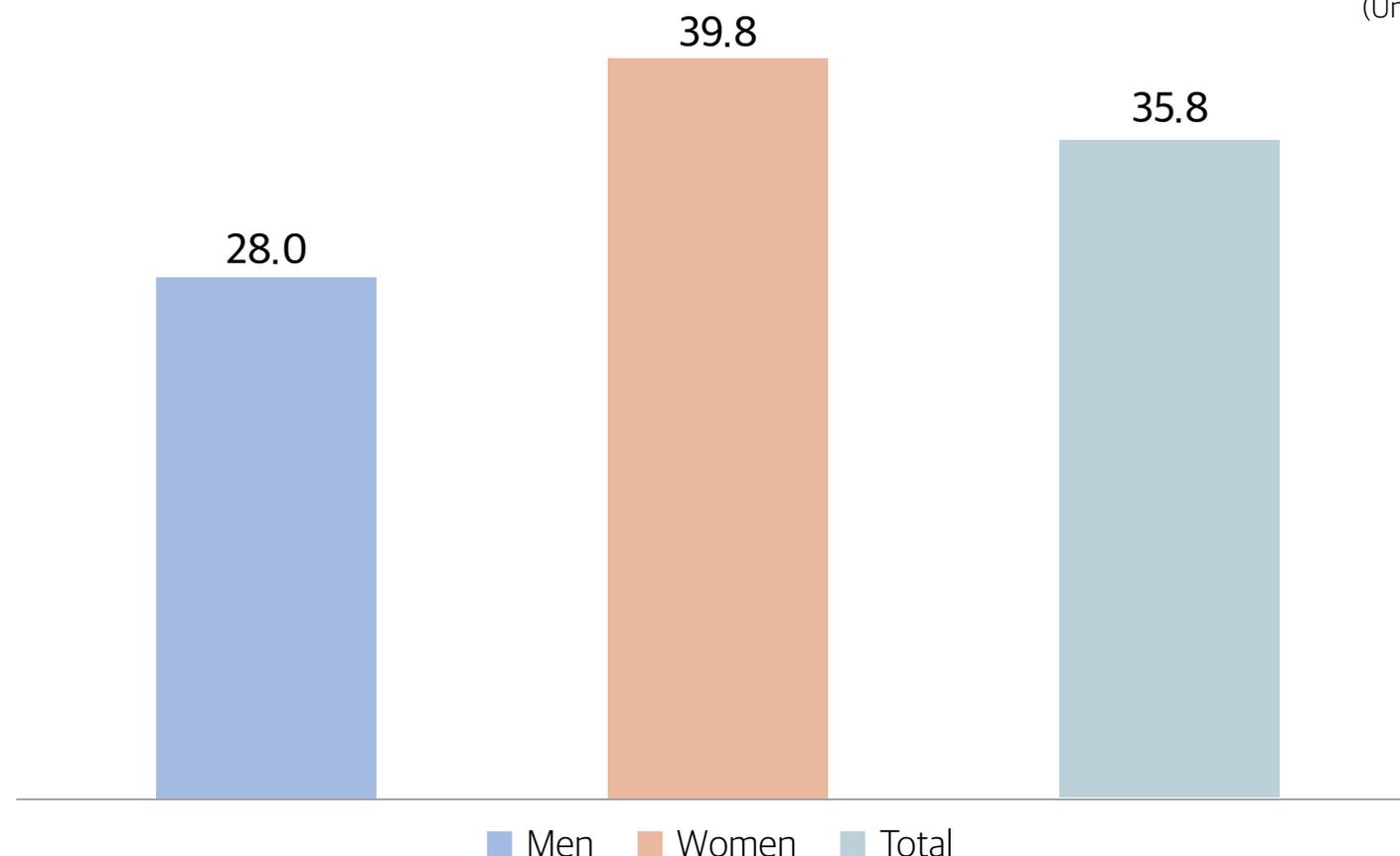
Crowd work allows the workers to flexibly adjust the time and place of work. This helps lower the barrier for women, who bear the responsibility for both care and housework, to engage in economic activities. However, crowd work gives low income, job insecurity, and a low level of social protection, facilitating the marginalization of women in the labor market(OECD, 2017; ILO, 2018).

Current status of women crowd workers

According to the survey of crowd workers* conducted by the Korea Women's Development Institute, 35.8% of the respondents were engaging in crowd work without any other job. Meanwhile, 28% of male respondents were engaging only in crowd work, but **39.8% of women, which is 10%p higher than that of men, were engaging only in crowd work.**

<Table 1> Respondents who answered that they have no other job than crowd work

(Unit: %)



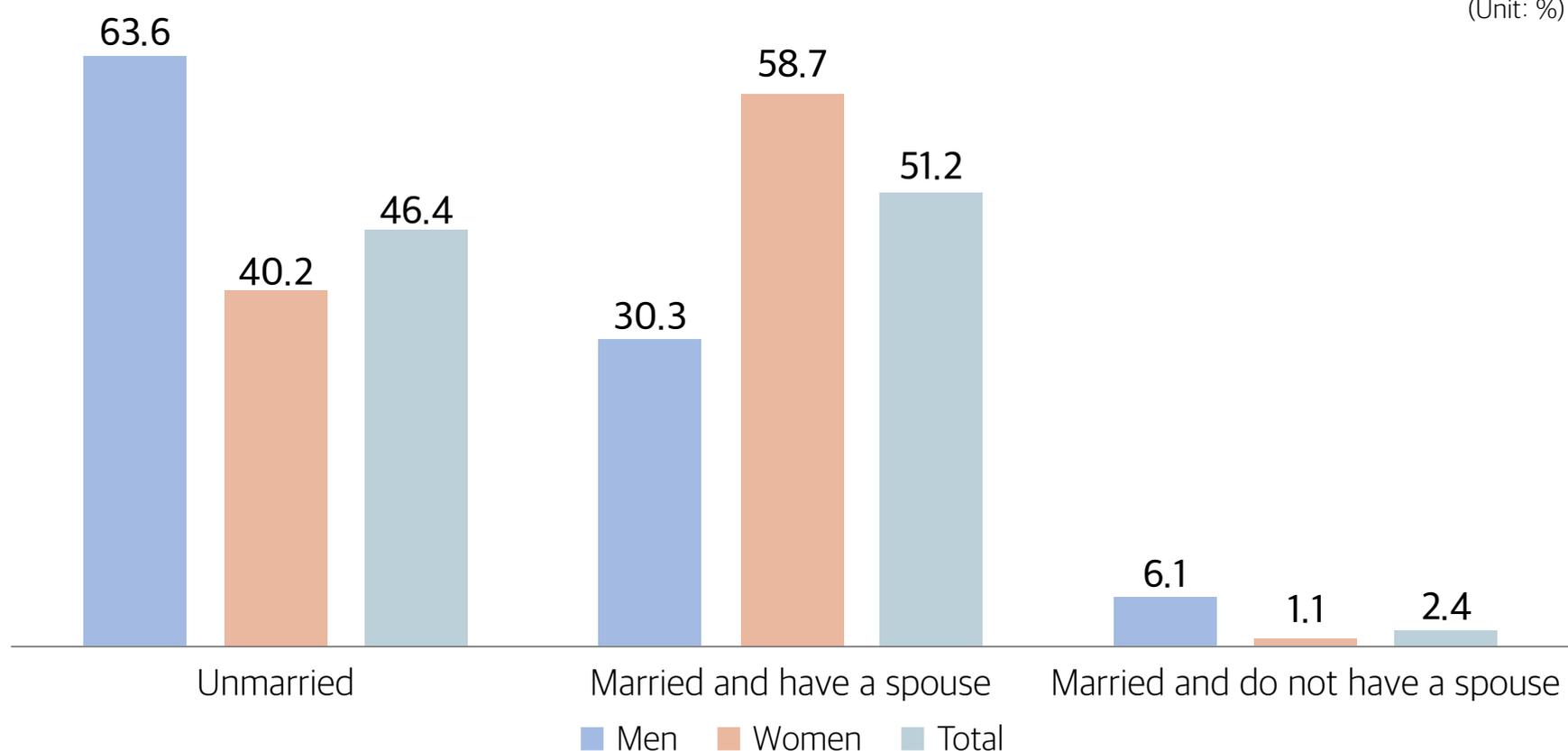
*Those who are currently doing crowd work or have experienced crowd work for the last 3 months

Current status of women crowd workers

Meanwhile, 28% of male respondents were engaging only in crowd work, but 39.8% of women, which is 10%p higher than that of men, were engaging only in crowd work. Among the women crowd workers without any other job, the proportion of those who are married and have a spouse was 58.7%, which was almost twice as high as that of male crowd workers who are married, have a spouse, and are engaging only in crowd work. This indicates that married women, who don't have any other job, tend to seek crowd work to work and at the same time care for their children and housework.

<Table 2> Distribution of marital status of those who are engaging only in crowd work by gender

(Unit: %)

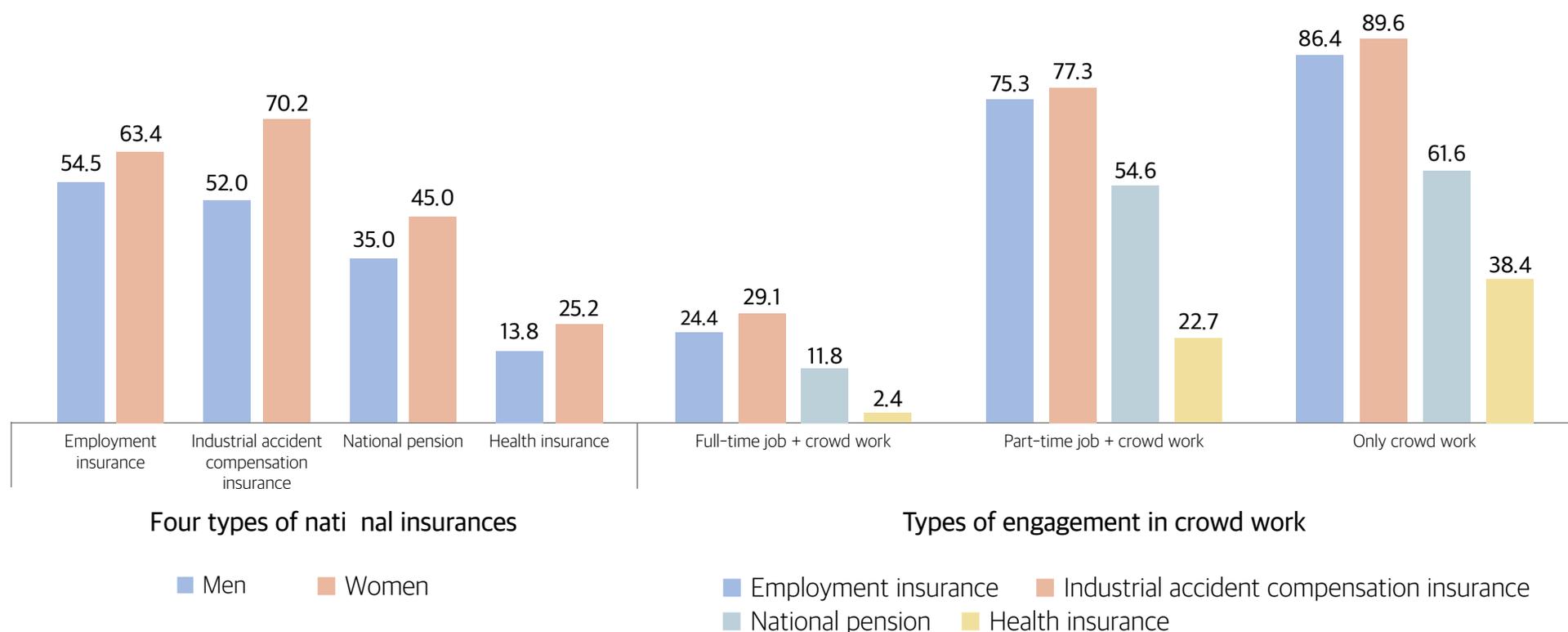


Social protection for women crowd workers

According to our survey, 6 out of 10 crowd workers have not subscribed to the employment insurance and the industrial accident compensation insurance. The uninsurance rate of women crowd workers was particularly higher than that of male crowd workers (those without employment insurance: men 54.5% vs. women 63.4%, those without industrial accident compensation insurance: men 52.0% vs. women 70.2%). The absolute number of crowd workers without national pension and health insurance is low, but the gap between male and female crowd workers still persists. Our survey shows that the uninsurance rate was high among the crowd workers who have another part-time job or the crowd workers who don't have any other job than crowd work.

<Table 3> Uninsurance rate of social insurance

(Unit: %)

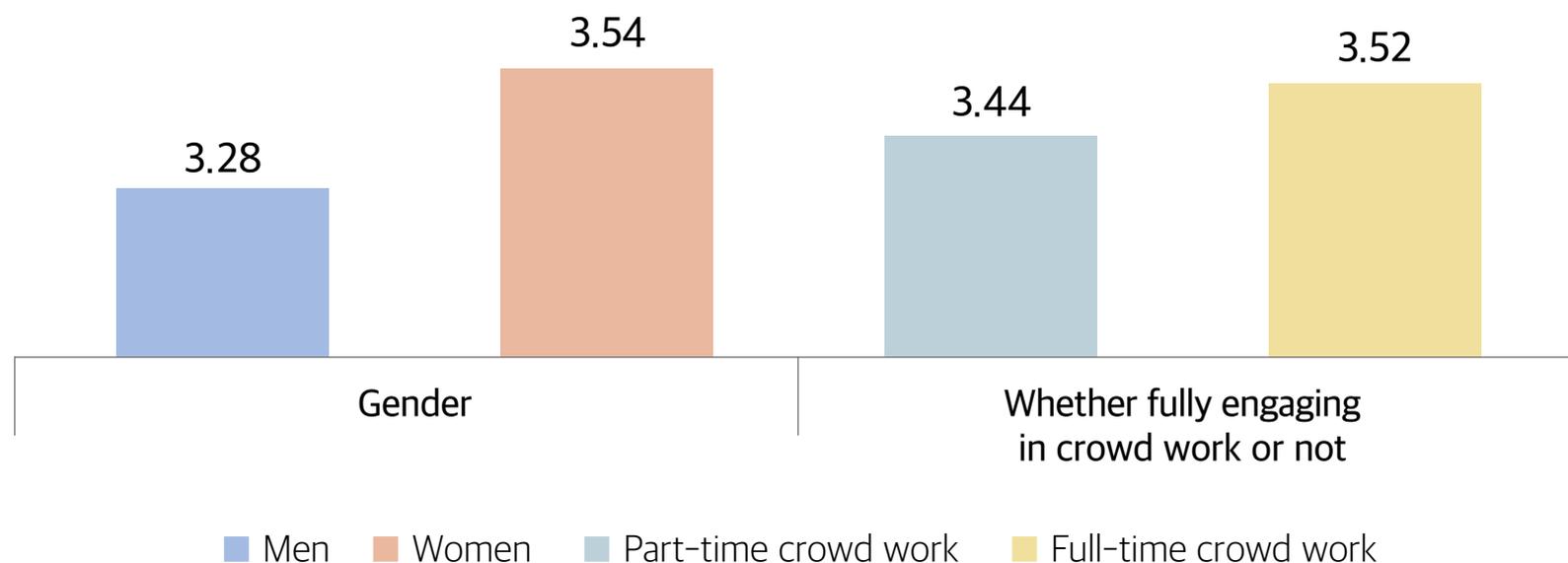


Career development of women crowd workers

Meanwhile, crowd workers perceived that their job is simple and does not require special skills. More women (3.54 points) than men (3.28 points) had such a perception. Considering the development of digital technologies, the government needs to provide crowd workers with policy support such as highly accessible, good quality vocational trainings and upskilling programs that will be helpful for increasing their employability.

<Table 4> Perception on the level of skills required for crowd work

(Unit: point)



Policy tasks for social protection and career development of crowd workers

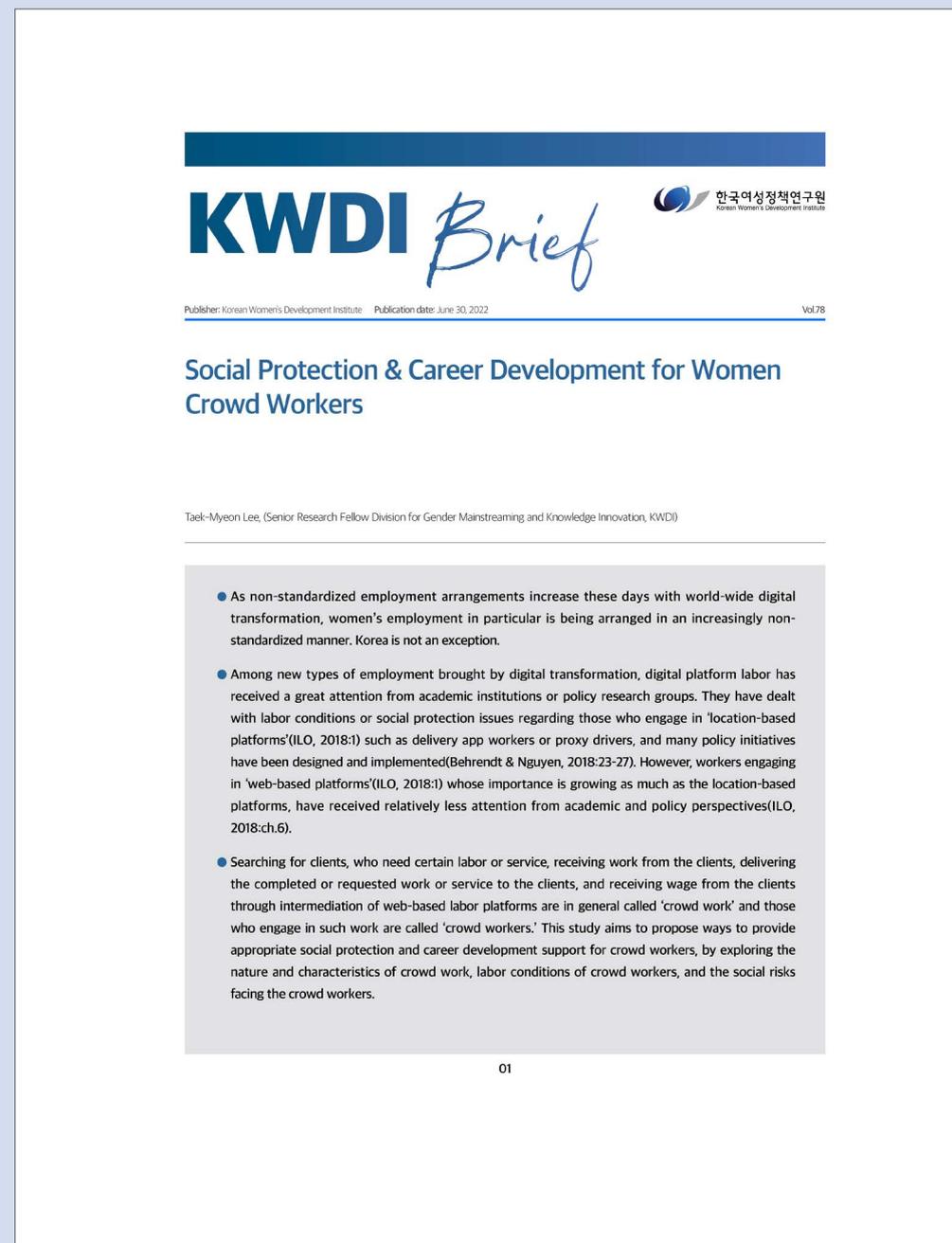
With digital transformation, we have seen a gradual increase in the number of workers under non-standardized employment such as crowd work, as a substitute for the traditional dependent employment arrangements. **However**, social protection system for non-standardized workers is still weak. In this regard, the government needs to establish a concrete legal ground to provide crowd workers with social protection and career development support and design a gender-sensitive policy to prevent women crowd workers from being excluded from such support programs.

Policy tasks for social protection and career development of crowd workers

It is critical to establish a sophisticated system to address how to provide social protection such as **family care and maternity protection** for all types of workers regardless of their employment types. It is also necessary to stipulate **prohibition of discrimination and sexual harassment** in the sector of platform labor.



Please refer to Korea Women's Development Website's
- Publications & Issues - KWDI Brief for more details.



The image shows the cover page of a KWDI Brief. At the top, there is a dark blue horizontal bar. Below it, the text "KWDI Brief" is displayed in a large, bold, blue font, with "Brief" in a cursive script. To the right of this text is the KWDI logo, which consists of a stylized blue and white circular emblem and the Korean text "한국여성정책연구원" and "Korean Women's Development Institute". Below the main title, there is a thin blue line with the text "Publisher: Korean Women's Development Institute Publication date: June 30, 2022" on the left and "Vol.78" on the right. The main title of the brief, "Social Protection & Career Development for Women Crowd Workers", is centered below the line. Underneath the title, the author's name "Taek-Myeon Lee, (Senior Research Fellow Division for Gender Mainstreaming and Knowledge Innovation, KWDI)" is listed. The main content of the brief is presented in a light gray box with three bullet points. The first bullet point discusses non-standardized employment arrangements. The second bullet point discusses digital platform labor and social protection issues. The third bullet point discusses crowd workers and the need for social protection and career development support. At the bottom of the gray box, the page number "01" is centered.

KWDI Brief 한국여성정책연구원
Korean Women's Development Institute

Publisher: Korean Women's Development Institute Publication date: June 30, 2022 Vol.78

Social Protection & Career Development for Women Crowd Workers

Taek-Myeon Lee, (Senior Research Fellow Division for Gender Mainstreaming and Knowledge Innovation, KWDI)

- As non-standardized employment arrangements increase these days with world-wide digital transformation, women's employment in particular is being arranged in an increasingly non-standardized manner. Korea is not an exception.
- Among new types of employment brought by digital transformation, digital platform labor has received a great attention from academic institutions or policy research groups. They have dealt with labor conditions or social protection issues regarding those who engage in 'location-based platforms'(ILO, 2018:1) such as delivery app workers or proxy drivers, and many policy initiatives have been designed and implemented(Behrendt & Nguyen, 2018:23-27). However, workers engaging in 'web-based platforms'(ILO, 2018:1) whose importance is growing as much as the location-based platforms, have received relatively less attention from academic and policy perspectives(ILO, 2018:ch.6).
- Searching for clients, who need certain labor or service, receiving work from the clients, delivering the completed or requested work or service to the clients, and receiving wage from the clients through intermediation of web-based labor platforms are in general called 'crowd work' and those who engage in such work are called 'crowd workers.' This study aims to propose ways to provide appropriate social protection and career development support for crowd workers, by exploring the nature and characteristics of crowd work, labor conditions of crowd workers, and the social risks facing the crowd workers.

01