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Tel.: 27787215-17; Fax: 91-11-27783467

Editorial e-mail: editorial_iamr@yahoo.com

Website: <http://iamrindia.gov.in>

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CONTENTS

<i>Note from the Editor-in-Chief</i>	vii
<i>Executive Editor's Note</i>	ix

ARTICLES

Inter-Social Group Disparities in Education in India — Gargi Ghosh	1
Gender Discrimination among Child Labour in Agriculture: A Study of Punjab — Mini Goyal and Pratibha Goyal	13
Dropouts and Wastage among the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Students in Engineering Colleges in Kerala — K. Rajan	27
Technical Efficiency of Farms in Jungalmahal of West Bengal — Subrata Kundu	49
Determinants of Seasonal Migration in India — Jajati Keshari Parida and S. Madheswaran	67

BOOK REVIEWS

<i>Work Matters – Critical Reflection on Contemporary Work</i> by Sharon C. Bolton & Maeve Houlihan — Feroz Khan	81
<i>Designing Human Resource Management Systems: A Leader's Guide</i> , by Jayant Mukherjee — Ruby Dhar	84

<i>Socio-Economic and Cultural Dimensions of Entrepreneurship in North East India</i> , by M. Kennedy Singh — Neha Kumra	87
<i>Socio-Economic Profile of Rural India (Series II)</i> by Raj Mohini Sethi — Bimal Kishore Sahoo	92
MANPOWER NEWS	97

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The Indian economic growth rate, after a few cyclical upswings since 2014, expanded to 7.3 per cent in the last quarter of 2014-15, thus setting to take off to be one of the fastest-growing economies of the world. The Gross value added (GVA) for the manufacturing and financial services sectors picked up pace giving a timely boost to the government's Make in India plan, Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, Digital India and the like. The country's growth rate surpassed the rapidly ascending China and there is a huge scope with all the steps the Government is taking and will continue to take in the course of the year. With our huge working age population and increasing investments in different sectors, our potential to reach a higher growth league is certainly more visible now.

More than 60 per cent of India's population is in the working age group of 15-59 years and more than 50 per cent of the population is below 25 years, allowing it with an opportunity to provide a skilled workforce to fill the expected shortfall in the ageing developed world. Only 2.3 per cent of the workforce has some formal skill training as compared to 68 per cent in UK, 75 per cent in Germany, 80 per cent in Japan and 96 per cent in South Korea. To enhance the stature of the country in the comity of nations, the Government has launched several initiatives to 'Skill India', setting a target of skilling 400 million people by 2022. Hon'ble Prime Minister has recently launched Skill India Campaign in New Delhi on the occasion of the first ever World Youth Skills Day which included the launch of the National Skill Development Mission and unveiling of the new National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship 2015, to confer special attention to address the needs for employability. Various initiatives like Rashtriya Kaushal Vikas Yojana, Skill Loan Scheme, Skill Card have been launched.

According to the recent National Sample Survey data, there had been an increase in the workforce by 14 million during the period 2009-10 to 2011-12, which is a profound improvement after the period of jobless growth, during 2004-05 to 2009-10, when the economy recorded a very high growth rate but employment level increased only marginally. Post 2005, however, there had been a major structural change in the labour force with a 37 million decline in agricultural employment and 52 million rise in non-farm sectors. The increase in employment during the period 2010 to 2012 had been mainly attributed to

manufacturing (textiles, apparel, food processing etc), construction and services (education, trade etc.) sectors. There should however, be more and specific focus on rural non-farm productive employment generation to accelerate the structural transformation that has begun and engage the skilled human resources that the country is building. Even though there are changes that are making the grade, the recently released data on Socio-Economic Caste Census 2011, revealed deprivations in many parts of the country that need to be immediately addressed. In 75 per cent of 17.9 crore households in rural India, the highest-earning member of a household earns less than Rs.5000 a month. Nearly 40 per cent are landless and work as manual casual labourers. As India is emerging as one of the world's fastest growing nations, appropriate macroeconomic policies aiming at fuller and more productive employment generation are required. Higher and sustainable growth requires reducing inequalities which undermine the productivity of the working people and reduce the realization of the full potential of its working population.

This journal is an attempt to provide useful reference material for academia, policy-makers and other readers towards labour economics research covering various aspects of the labour force, and the related constraints to understand the necessities and develop appropriate and effective policy responses.

Dr. Yogesh Suri
Director-General

EXECUTIVE EDITOR'S NOTE

Economic growth and employment generation has been one of the priority areas of Indian policy. The country on the one hand faces the challenges of globalised market that drain the top skilled professionals from India in the form of emigration, on the other, there are large number of semi- or un-skilled labour force that need to be trained and skilled in order to effectively contribute to the economy. This is happening at a time when India has been witnessing a unique situation of demographic dividend which can be both advantage and disadvantage for the social and economic development. The large number of youth population which is a potential resource for country's progress doesn't have access to education and skills. Equal access to education and skill training is one of the most important issues though it is not an easy process to achieve. A complex array of factors, such as economic, political, social, psychological as well as cultural, influence the outcomes. The resources that are required for providing skills and education are huge though the benefits are long term. There is a need for policy strategy. On the more subtle side, there are psychological aspects such as attitude to work, work culture, cultural and social factors related to the feudal set up and the systems like caste, gender and communities. Many of these factors hinder the inclusive participation in the workforce. Often, this happen more in rural areas than the urban areas where rigid traditional social system is strongly prevalent and there is little scope for mobility. Even though, the constitution of India has emphasised the equal access to education, there is still a long way to go.

Addressing marginalisation, building human resource and sustaining growth has always been a challenge. Alongside this, the synergy among various environmental, societal and economic goals is an essential component of sustainable planning. This issue of Manpower Journal has a right blend of articles on these important issues. As a whole, the issue critically examines the sustainable growth with environmental, economic and societal vision and also provides a roadmap through empirical solutions.

Gargi Ghosh's article, 'Inter-social Group Disparities in Education in India' examines the disparities in access to education among overall population and among different regions, gender-wise, religious communities, minorities, and tries to assess India's position in internal perspective.

Child labour is another area which needs much attention. Within child labour, discrimination exists among boys and girls in terms of work and wages. Mini

and Pratibha Goyal in their study ‘Gender Discrimination among Child Labour in Agriculture’ tries to determine the participation of male and female child labour and gender-wise differences in education, employment and wage rate paid to them in agriculture and allied activities in Punjab.

Even after 60 years of independence one of the major issues that are constantly worrying the policy makers is dropouts and wastage in education in general and among SC and ST students in particular. Realising the educational backwardness of SCs, STs and other backward communities, many attempts were made by the social reformers and government to increase the enrolment of scheduled castes (SCs) and scheduled tribes (STs) in schools and in higher educational institutions. K. Rajan in his study ‘Dropouts and Wastage among Students in Engineering Colleges in Kerala’ attempts to assess the extent of dropouts and wastage among the SCs, STs and other backward communities in Kerala.

Though Indian economy is slowly shifting from agriculture to manufacturing, still agriculture plays a dominant role. Actual income from agriculture can be increased by operating through technical efficiency. Subrata Kundu’s paper ‘Technical Efficiency of Farms in Jungalmahal of West Bengal’ deals with the estimation of overall technical efficiency and attempts to identify the factors which have influenced technical efficiency.

Seasonal migration is a common phenomenon among agricultural labourers in India. The seasonal migration makes the migrant labourers physically, socially and economically vulnerable. To control seasonal migration, the government has introduced Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS). In the paper ‘Determinants of Seasonal Migration in India’, Jajati and Madheswaran attempt to study the phenomenon of seasonal migration in India and its determinants by using the utility maximisation principle.

This issue of the journal contains four book reviews: the first one titled ‘Work Matters: Critical Reflection on Contemporary Work’ discusses matter of work and why works matter in various ranges of workers and across sectors. The second book ‘Designing Human Resource Management Systems: A Leader’s Guide’ deals with subsystems of Human Resource Management involving job analysis, human resource planning, recruitment and selection, performance management system, mentoring and executive coaching and reward management. The third book titled ‘Socio-Economic and Cultural Dimensions of Entrepreneurship in North East India’ provides a profile of the potential entrepreneurs, socio-cultural imperatives of entrepreneurship development and the socio-cultural and technological changes taking place due to entrepreneurship development in Kakching. The fourth review of the book ‘Socio-Economic Profile of Rural India’ presents enlightening details of the socio-economic indicators of development, existing infrastructure facilities, land use pattern, reforms and farm and non-farm employment opportunities and the major constrains of development in each state.

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