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NOTES & COMMENTS

BOOK REVIEWS

MANPOWER NEWS



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NOTE FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Inclusive and sustainable economic growth requires a development agenda that embraces economic, social and environmental sustainability. The 2030 development agenda intends to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value (Sustainable Development Goal #8). Development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and formalization and growth of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises need to be promoted in this context.

There are concerted efforts from the Government to achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological up-gradation and innovation, developing and operationalising a strategy to increase youth employment and foster entrepreneurship. To take the economy to a high growth trajectory, it is essential that the economy transforms itself from mere job seekers to job creators. India had ranked 130 out of 189 countries in the Ease of Doing Business Report, 2016 moving up four notches from previous year. India's rank has improved in 'starting a business', 'dealing with construction permit' and 'getting electricity' indicators. To take India to a higher tread, the Government is taking multi-pronged initiatives for ease of doing business, including IT-enabled government process, amendments to the Companies' Act for an enabling environment for start-ups, swifter registration of firms, expanding access to financial services, improving the skill level and expanding the information base and reduction in the information cost. The Stand-up India' Scheme that promotes entrepreneurship among women, scheduled castes and tribes by enabling them to secure easier loans can be an engine of job creation for the youth. It is likely to create 2.5 lakh such entrepreneurs across the country.

As the Indian economy is experiencing a demographic dividend, along with rising educational enrolment and structural change in employment pattern, it is also important that the country transforms and transits towards a more digital economy to promote inclusion, efficiency and innovation. The digital economy has brought a revolution globally, enabling many to access work, access to finance, access to market, reduction in transaction cost etc. This structural transformation would be truly empowering if the labour force has access to such technology,

necessary skill to use it and analog complements to support. The world is witnessing rapid changes in the nature of work, in types of occupations, in nature of skills demanded and therefore, the labour force should be prepared to reap the benefits of such transformation. The skills agenda should therefore focus on developing such skills that can leverage the technological changes.

The articles in this issue reflect the differences in labour market outcomes among different socio-economic groups in the country and the occupational segregation in different sectors. Such intergroup disparities need to be arrested for sustainable development of the country. Economic diversification, enhancement in productivity (particularly the primary sector), developing advanced cognitive and socio-emotional skills, technological inclusion to reach the unreached and participatory policy making can accelerate economic and social mobility and therefore lead to a faster and inclusive economic growth.

Dr. Yogesh Suri
Director-General
NILERD

EXECUTIVE EDITOR'S NOTE

The labour market in India is highly stratified as well as diversified due to variety of social, geographical, cultural or even political reasons. It is also highly segmented due to inherent social and cultural systems such as caste, gender, rural and urban, education and skills etc. The segmentation in the labour market quite often hinders the mobility and hence utilisation of labour in its full potential for the economy. Geographically India is highly diverse and so also the economy that is dependent on the geographical specificity. In certain areas the economy is predominantly based on services sector such as tourism, and in others it is agriculture, fisheries and so on. As India has a federal system, States are represented by Governments with various ideologies. In certain States, labourers get better rights and privileges than in other, solely because of ideological orientation of the party that governs. All these diversities and segmentation influence the labour market.

Today, the size of informal sector of the labour market in India is one of the largest in the world, only next to China. 94% of India's labour works in informal sector, which is further growing. Therefore, the vast section of society is in the informal sector and hence the sector needs serious attention at policy level.

In this issue, there are four papers touching the multiple layers of labour market, discriminatory practices and suggesting affirmative action. The characteristics of Indian labour market, especially discrimination in the segmented labour markets based on social attributes are well reflected in these papers.

Anupama in her article "Labour Market Discrimination in India: The Caste Matters" discusses how the caste based division of work, in contrast to the ability based division, leads to unequal outcomes in the labour market. Such discrimination is a complex process, where multiple positions of people are shaped by a variety of social attributes. In this paper she highlights the labour market discrimination among various social groups in India which has been measured from the household level data of 68th Round of NSSO on *Employment and Unemployment Situation in India, 2011-12*. This paper also tries to estimate the mean wage gap across groups. Using the Oaxaca decomposition technique, an attempt has been made to decompose the mean wage gap between two social groups into the 'endowment' differences and 'treatment' differences. The Author observes that regularity of jobs, its formal nature and education are the important factors influencing the wages positively and the share of the marginalised

social groups is much lower in regular/formal jobs. She suggests that effective implementation of the existing social protection policy is needed to protect the marginalised social groups and it should be extended to private sector as well.

In the Notes and Comments section three papers are included. In these papers the authors examine the informal sector issues such as social security, challenges to the traditional labour force that could not upgrade the skills and knowledge and perceptions of middle class ‘Dalits’ on protective discrimination and social mobility.

The share of informal workers in total employment is very high in India. Living conditions of majority of the elderly population who were mainly informal workers are also very poor and pathetic and over time both the share and size of elderly population is increasing. The Government is spending a large sum of money on social security for elderly persons. In future it may be difficult for the Government to bear the burden of such a huge expenditure. Santlal Arora in his article “Contributory Pension Schemes for Informal Workers in India: An Important Link to Transform Informal Workers into Formal Workers” discusses about various social security schemes and emphasises the importance of Contributory Pension Schemes for informal workers and how it can be an important link to transform the informal workers into formal workers so that they can lead a comfortable old-age and be less dependent on the Government. The paper also discusses the ways to increase the participation of informal workers in Contributory Pension Schemes.

Jerry Joseph in his article “Modernisation of Marine Fisheries Sector and Its Impact on the Livelihood of Traditional Fisher-Folk” based on cases and observations, intends to provide insight into the Marine fisheries sector of India. The article throws light on the changes that crept in due to modernisation like entry of huge shipping vessels fitted with latest technology and its impact on the traditional fisher-folk. The author also discusses about the conflict between traditional fishermen and the boat owners and the agitation against foreign vessels in the Indian coastal zones and those operating at high seas. The author argues that the conflicts have to be seriously looked at to ensure a fair amount of distributive equality to the marginalized communities such as the traditional marine fisher-folk of India as marine fisheries is an important sector in India which brings precious foreign exchange and also creates employment bringing income to a large number of traditional fisher-folk and their families living in the coastal areas.

G. Srinivas in his paper “Reservations, Creamy Layer and the Dalit Middle Class” discusses about the reservations system and its contribution for the emergence of the Dalit Middle Class and their mobility. The paper deals with

the issues of education, employment, reservations and the question of creamy layer with reference to Dalit middle class. It examines varied perceptions in deciding the criteria for availing of reservations in the context of creamy layer. It examines the current utilization patterns of reservations by the middle class Dalits and their aspiration for its future utilization. He feels that the Dalit middle class is a by-product of the State's policy of protective discrimination.

This issue of the journal contains four book reviews: The first book titled "Women's Employment and the Capitalist Family: Towards a Political Economy of Gender and Labour Market" discusses the status of women in changing capitalist economy, their participation in the labour market and explains the interrelationship of 'public-private patriarchal behaviour patterns' which benefit men to make the status of women subordinate to them, both inside and outside the home. The second book "Panorama of Development: Challenges Ahead" highlights the situation of underprivileged groups of society and explores the various issues around development from the policy perspective in India, China and Southern Africa.

The third book titled "Institutional Design for tackling Child Labour Problem" provides a detailed insight into the various dimensions of child labour like social, economic, religious, gender, age, size of the family, migration, low income of parents, broken home, lack of vocational schools etc. and the main sectors such as beedi rolling, quarrying, livestock rearing, sericulture and mining where child labour is prevalent. The fourth book "India's Tryst with BT Cotton Learning from the First Decade" provides a detailed assessment of BT Cotton technology and its adaptation in India, based on empirical research, and highlights several important aspects on the experiences of BT Cotton farming in select cotton growing states of the country.

The last section of this issue presents a compilation of national and international news items on various manpower related issues reproduced from both print and electronic media.

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An **abstract** (of about 150 words) should be submitted along with the paper at the time of submission. Illustrations, figures, maps and graphs should be prepared in black and white and be kept to the minimum.

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Hazell, P. and S. Haggblade (1991), "Rural-Urban Growth Linkages in India", *Indian Journal of Agricultural Economics*, Vol. 46, No. 4, pp. 515-529.

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Saith, Ashwani (1992), *The Rural Non-farm Economy: Process and Policies*, ILO, Geneva.

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