

Changing Dynamics of Labour Market in India

Challenges and Opportunities

Introduction

The Indian labour market is undergoing a transformative phase driven by a combination of factors such as rapid technological advancements, demographic shifts, urbanisation, evolving policy frameworks, and global economic trends. These factors significantly impact traditional employment relations, paving way for new employment models. They are influential in determining wages, skill requirements, and labour market inclusions. Moreover, the persistence of informality throws up challenges with respect to labour regulation, social security and livelihood security. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for shaping policies in order to address unemployment, underemployment, and economic inequality, while preparing the workforce for future challenges.

This conclave aims to provide a comprehensive platform for doctoral students and early-career researchers to discuss the evolving landscape of labour dynamics in India, focusing on the key trends, challenges, and opportunities.

Objectives

1. **Examine Emerging Trends:** Understand the key factors driving changes in India's labour market, such as automation, the gig economy, self-employment, migration, and globalisation.
2. **Identify Challenges:** Discuss the critical challenges faced by India's workforce, including unemployment, informal sector growth, skill gaps, gender disparities and caste-based exclusions.
3. **Explore Negotiations and Policy Solutions:** Evaluate the role of trade unions, government policies and labour laws in adapting to these changes and promoting decent work for all.
4. **Highlight Opportunities:** Identify potential growth areas for employment and skill development, especially in sectors like IT services, manufacturing, and the care economy.

Key Themes for Discussion

1. Understanding the crisis of employment: Issues in demand and supply

- a. Why is a growing economy failing to create jobs?
- b. Role of private investments and public expenditure in creating jobs
- c. What are the initiatives required to bridge the skill gap, especially for those from marginal backgrounds?
- d. How can India's education and vocational training systems be aligned with the changing needs of industries?

2. Informality: Challenges and opportunities

- a. How does the emergence of new labour dynamics (e.g., gig economy, remote work) influence the transition of workers between the informal and formal economies in India?
- b. How do shifts in India's formal labour market affect the size and nature of the informal economy?
- c. What are the primary factors driving the growth of the informal economy in India, and how have these factors evolved in recent decades?

3. Inclusions, Exclusions and Discriminatory practices

- a. Determinants of low Female Labour Force Participation and the burden of unpaid labour
- b. Labour market inequality, social discrimination, segmentation, unequal opportunities, contractualisation, expansion of migrant labour
- c. Wages discrimination based on social identity in urban labour market: role of gender and caste

4. Labour welfare, rights and the role collective bargaining: Policy responses to the needs of labour and capital

- a. The gig economy is providing flexible employment opportunities, but it also raises concerns about job security, wages, and social protection. How can labour policies address the needs of gig workers?
- b. What role do trade unions play in securing better wages, working

conditions, and social protections for part-time, freelance, and temporary workers?

- c. What are the strategies adopted by trade unions in extending traditional collective bargaining agreements for atypical workforce, and what are the challenges?
- d. With recent reforms in India's labour laws, what is the future of labour rights and social security in the country?
- e. How can labour policies balance the interests of workers and businesses in a rapidly changing economic environment?
- f. How to ensure fair and equitable outcomes to workers of conventional sectors during a transition to a green economy?

4. Rural employment: growth on non-farm sector, impact of social programmes, migration and urbanisation

- a. Continuities and change in rural labour relations: unorganised informal labour, exploitation and labour agency in the agricultural sector
- b. Changes in the structure of rural employment, growth of non-farm employment, issues of underemployment, productivity and improvement in incomes
- c. Effects of social programmes on the labour market: MNERGA, NRLM, NULM, Self-Help Groups and Microfinance
- d. How structural transformation, internal migration and urbanization affect employment opportunities and labour dynamics, particularly for rural workers and low-income groups?
- e. In what ways can rural employment opportunities in climate-resilient agriculture address the growing trend of rural-urban migration and urbanisation?

5. Future of employment

- a. How are emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and automation affecting jobs in India?
- b. What sectors are most at risk, and how can the workforce be reskilled for future jobs?
- c. Job creation potential through investments in the care economy
- d. How can India assert its role in the global value chains?
- e. What is the potential for job growth in urban areas as cities invest in green infrastructure to address climate adaptation?

6. Securing livelihoods

- a. Assessing climate risks to the livelihoods of rural or tribal populations.
- b. How can traditional farming knowledge and farmer-led innovation contribute to climate-resilient agricultural practices?
- c. Development and dispossession - livelihood issues of the marginalized population in India

Target Contributors

Doctoral Students and early-career scholars

Expected Outcomes

Best papers may be considered for publication in the special edition of MIDS Journal, *Review of Development and Change*.

Date, Venue and Structure of the programme

Date: 10–11 March 2025

Venue: Adiseshiah Auditorium, MIDS

Structure: Two-day conclave comprising two keynote lectures and six technical sessions with one discussant and three participants each.