

Creating an Informed Discourse on
Good and Better Jobs in India
Roundtable Discussion

29th January 2019, New Delhi

Proceedings

Introduction

1. The fundamentals of ‘industrialism’ are being challenged world over. These fundamentals are premised upon the relationship between factors of production i.e. land, labour, technology and capital. In the new economy facilitated by unprecedented technological intervention, this relationship is increasingly being redefined and the search to disrupt drivers of economic inequality is pre-occupying policy discourse globally.
2. It is therefore not surprising that questions about the fundamental structures of economies are gaining traction. India too is no exception. With a burgeoning labour force coupled with challenges of jobless growth, equity and sustainability, these questions are all too important for India also.
3. Experts are beginning to realise that the forces that have created this situation need to be examined along with the forces that can help create truly inclusive growth models which can guarantee meaningful livelihood and adequate incomes, so that a balanced production and

consumption cycle can continue with 'humans' at the centre of production and consumption of 'goods and services'.

4. Insights on how to move in that direction can be gained by examining forces shaping the behaviour of enterprises and the institutions that regulate them, amongst other things. The project titled '**Strengthening the Discourse on Economic Policies for Good and Better Jobs**' being steered by **CUTS International** and supported by the **Ford Foundation** is an important entry point to gain such insights.
5. In this context, a project launch meeting was organised by CUTS International to deliberate on the methodology to be adopted for the project. A detailed list of the participants is enclosed as Annexure 1.

Key points discussed:

1. While good and better jobs can be subject to relative understanding of different stakeholders, it needs to be understood as a critical element to a 'good' and 'healthy' economy, for addressing the challenges emanating from income inequality. This is because without adequate incomes and avenues for capability enhancement of workers both productive and consumptive capacity of the economy may be compromised. A detailed review of how this concept has been defined elsewhere can help in breaking down the approach for the field inquiry.
2. The traditional macroeconomic understanding of linking increase/decrease in employment with increase/decrease in aggregate demand in the economy stands challenged due to factors that have impacted the relationship between the two. Therefore, it is necessary to examine those factors through secondary review and field inquiry.
3. Examination of the reasons that make enterprises value human resources will also be essential along with the examination of how that results in the satisfaction of workers.

4. The project must give due regard to the fact that systems are designed to produce the results that they currently produce. Therefore, both formal and informal sectors must be accorded equal importance during the field inquiry and effort should be made to record reasons, constraints and conditions to see how systems are working on the ground.

With regard to determining methodology for the field inquiry, the following approach will be followed:

1. As the boundaries of sectors are rapidly changing, **clusters** in the **supply chain** spanning **different geographies** should form the basis of study.
2. Cluster identification should be based on a structured approach such as the one enunciated in the **Porter Framework**. Other sources, such as the work of Ricardo Hausmann, may also be referred to.
3. Clusters should subscribe to industries where **demand growth** is high or likely to be high and which have the potential for **high labour intensity**.
4. To get holistic understanding, industries which cater to **domestic demand** as well as industries which are **export oriented** should be considered for the field inquiry.
5. Each field inquiry should help in improvising the next phase and all lessons learnt should be documented in detail. The project should serve as a **continuous learning** opportunity and these learnings should be widely disseminated. The endeavour should be to do detailed qualitative field work across few industries rather than focussing on quantity or too many sectors. Therefore, an amount of flexibility will be needed to improvise each stage of the project.
6. The endeavour of the field inquiry should also be to analyse the ecosystem that exists on the ground and what can be built on that

ecosystem in a sustainable manner. This ecosystem, amongst other things, includes **technology, regulation and trade value chains**.

7. The secondary research must also consider General Economic Tables or B-Series Tables compiled under the Census of India, and NSSO Surveys on Unincorporated Non-Agricultural Enterprises. The former provides a disaggregated district-level picture of employment trends, while the latter provides valuable information about the informal sector that is not captured elsewhere. This is important because **district-level trends are rarely captured in public discourse**.
8. Wherever possible comparative **cross-country** studies of cities/regions with **similar industrial characteristics** and different levels of growth, such as Dhaka and Howrah, or Sialkot and Jalandhar, may also be considered to enrich the research.
9. The key will be to stitch together several micro-level narratives to articulate a macro level picture. An **analytical narrative** must be sought as the project outcome to **shape the future story** on employment and economy. Such a narrative can be developed by seeking regular views on field findings from a **broad coalition of policy influencers**. Such a coalition must be **nurtured continuously**. Amongst the outputs, the project should be implemented through stories and ethnographic case studies of selected clusters and enterprises.
10. Last but not the least, the project **does not focus on agriculture production and consumption**, mainly because there is relatively larger gap in knowledge about the ecosystem in manufacturing and service sectors.
11. An e-group managed and curated by CUTS International should be created to share **continuous learnings** from the project.

Annexure 1

List of Participants

| S.No. | Name | Designation & Organisation |
|-------|------------------|---|
| 1 | Abhishek Kumar | Director CUTS International Jaipur, Rajasthan |
| 2 | Amit Kapoor | President Institute for Competitiveness Gurgaon, Haryana |
| 3 | Arun Maira | Former Member Planning Commission of India New Delhi |
| 4 | Bipul Chatterjee | Executive Director CUTS International Jaipur, Rajasthan |
| 5 | Emarine Kharbhih | Program Manager Impulse NGO Network Shillong, Meghalaya |
| 6 | Himanshu | Associate Professor Centre for Economic Studies and Planning Jawaharlal Nehru University New Delhi |
| 7 | Johann Ivanov | Deputy Representative and Program Director Social Justice Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) New Delhi |
| 8 | Kazim Rizvi | Founding Director The Dialogue New Delhi |
| 9 | Manish Bahl | Associate Vice President Centre for the Future of Work Cognizant New Delhi |
| 10 | Pradeep S. Mehta | Secretary General CUTS International Jaipur, Rajasthan |

| S.No. | Name | Designation & Organisation |
|-------|-----------------------|---|
| 11 | Prateep Roy | Dr. Prateep Roy M&E Specialist Jaipur, Rajasthan |
| 12 | R. Nagaraj | Professor Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research Mumbai |
| 13 | Radhicka Kapoor | Senior Fellow Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER) New Delhi |
| 14 | Rituparna Chakraborty | Co-Founder & Executive Vice President Team Lease Services Ltd. Bangalore |
| 15 | Sabina Dewan | President and Executive Director Just Jobs Network New Delhi |
| 16 | Sanjay Mangla | Fellow CUTS International Jaipur, Rajasthan |
| 17 | Santosh Mehrotra | Professor Jawaharlal Nehru University New Delhi |
| 18 | Sehaj Malik | Program Adviser Socio-Economic Transformation Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) New Delhi |
| 19 | Shruti Ambast | Assistant Policy Analyst CUTS International Jaipur, Rajasthan |
| 20 | Sohini Gupta | Project Manager Centre for Responsible Business (CRB) New Delhi |
| 21 | Srinivasan Iyer | Program Officer Ford Foundation New Delhi |
| 22 | Sudipto Mundle | President CUTS International |

| S.No. | Name | Designation & Organisation |
|-------|--------------|--|
| | | New Delhi |
| 23 | Ujjwal Kumar | Policy Analyst, CUTS International Jaipur, Rajasthan |