

**Roundtable on Future of Jobs in India  
Shillong | October 9, 2018  
Report**

Creation of jobs and better livelihoods is crucial for policymakers across the globe, including India. With transformations taking place in the form of automation and digitalisation along with diminishing export markets, there is a need for participatory process of decision making and to create a stronger alignment amongst the stakeholders towards a national agenda like job growth.

There is a need to formulate a political strategy in order to accommodate or deal with such a transformation and thereby create better jobs and to also deliberate on the following:

- How to create an enabling condition for generation of better livelihoods
- Identification of jobs that not prone to automation
- What is the role of the state in facilitation of social security

In this context, a **Roundtable on Future of Jobs** was organised by CUTS International and FES, India on October 9, 2018 in Shillong with an objective to identify and map the current discourse communities and the actors driving the discourses in the context of future of jobs in India and capture the regional perspective of north-eastern states in India, with respect to job creation.

## **D) Key Points Discussed**

### **1. Job creation must reflect the needs of the region:**

The issue of job creation in India is not homogeneous in nature and is also associated with the geography of the country.

The North-eastern region has tribal culture and hence, the challenges faced by the region pertaining to job creation are distinctive in nature. As the region is different from the rest of the country, the policies formulated for the rest of the country in order to facilitate job creation may not address the challenges of the north-eastern region.

As the culture of community in the north-east is strong, the region has a different take on work or job creation. Firstly, communities in the north-east do not have a fight for meal in a community setup. Hence, jobs in the north-east are largely created in creative space, which is art and music, which is not tangential in nature. As tribal communities take pride in their culture and livelihood activities associated with their culture, blue-collar jobs and services may be looked down upon by these communities.

### **2. Gig economy based jobs for the millenials:**

The future of jobs is jobs in the gig economy, which is characterized by freelance work or short-term contracts and provides flexibility to the employees. Further, for the millennials, as there is no struggle for earning bread for the family, they do not hesitate from taking up jobs in the gig economy.

### 3. **Need for a state narrative, apart from the national narrative on job creation:**

It is essential that the region or states in the region have a developmental narrative different from the national one, so as to set the targets and path for the development of the region which addresses the challenges and issues of the region.

Despite of a regional planning body established by the Central Government, the North Eastern Council has not been able to address the socio-economic requirements of the region. This is due to lack of coherence in the policies developed by the Council and the aspirations of the communities in the region. As the north-east India has protected identities which are being subsumed in the national identity, it is essential for the states to have their own agenda of job creation and socio-economic development priorities which are based on the communal identities.

### 4. **Natural resource based economy and Bio-Entrepreneurship:**

The north-east region is a labour intensive economy that has abundance of natural resources. It is essential that a long term approach or strategy is adopted in order to create jobs in the north-east by first understanding the socio-economic dynamics of the region. In order to bring the region into the national mainstream, the narrative for the region could be to bring jobful growth based on utilization of natural resources and promotion of traditional enterprises.

The region has great potential for bio-entrepreneurship, which means the agro-processing sector. The training on aspects like grading and packaging of fruits and access to markets could lead to a greater value addition in the traditional horticulture and floriculture activities.

### 5. **On Skill Development Programmes:**

#### • **Need for region specific skill development programmes:**

The challenges pertaining to job creation in the north east region is different as compared to other regions of the country. Under the Skill India Mission, programmes for skill development and training for the north-east is largely sub-contracted to the skill development agencies, which are not aware of the needs and challenges of the area.

The skilling programmes are not designed to allow the workers to leverage the already existing skills to the next level. The contractual method of creating jobs in the north-east does not address the issues pertaining to market access. Further, skilling programmes in the north-east are aimed towards mere achievement of pre-determined targets of skilling a number of workers. Such an artificial skilling could also lead to destruction of cultural and traditional skills of the region.

#### • **Need to create access to market:**

The skill development programmes are not able to provide the desired skills that could be leveraged by the people to scale the level of quality of the products and hence, provide access to the market. Aggregator models for individual producers and weavers or clusters of small enterprises could further help in creation of access to markets to the individual producers.

### 6. **Migration and issues pertaining to labour rights:**

Migration is a crucial challenge in the rural areas in the north-east. Labourers from rural areas north-east migrate to mining regions of the north east or to highly industrialised states like Gujarat in search

of jobs in manufacturing units. Private enterprises or industries prefer to hire migrant labourers in their manufacturing units as migrant workers do not pose threats pertaining to labour rights issues.

## II) Discourse Mapping Exercise:

Discourse mapping helps to visualise the political field, by mapping various discourse communities and the actors driving those discourses. It enables the participants to identify the centre of political gravity and to locate the best entry point for the change narrative. The discourse map is provided in the **Annexure 1**.

### 1. Identification of Discourses:

The following 16 current discourse communities were identified.

Sr. No.	Development Narrative	Job creation Paradigm	Stakeholders	Policy
	<b>Why</b> do we need to this (e.g. Create jobs)? What is the development model for the society as a whole?	<b>What</b> is the problem (e.g. Jobless growth)? <b>What</b> needs to be done (to create jobs)?		<b>How</b> to do it?
1.	<b>Look East</b>	Indigenous Development (Knowledge and Trade Hub), <i>Asmita</i>	Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), Media and Government of India (GOI)	
2.	<b>Act East</b>	Connectivity and Investments	GOI	
3.	<b>Vision 2020</b>		CSOs, Think Tanks, NITI	
4.	<b>Make in India</b>	(Traditional) (Primarily Women-led) Home Based Production	GOI	North-East Industrial Promotion Policy
5.	<b>Start-Up India</b>	Local Entrepreneurship	GOI	Micro-Finance Institutions
6.	<b>Incredible India (Incredible North East)</b>	(Eco-/ Adventure-) Tourism and Hospitality	Politicians and GOI	
7.	<b>Digital India</b>	Digital Connectivity	GOI, Pvt.	NE BPO Promotion Scheme (NEBPS)/CSE Schemes, National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN)
8.	<b>Swachh Bharat</b>	Waste Management (potential job creator), Waste to Energy	GOI	
9.	<b>Horti-/Flori-culture Missions</b>	Farm and Non-Farm Jobs	CSOs, State Government	
10.	<b>Organic North East</b>	(Organic) Farm and Allied Jobs	CSOs	
11.	<b>National Bamboo Mission</b>	Bamboo Entrepreneurship (Agro and Manufacturing)	Multilateral organisationa,	NERCORMP (North-East Region)

			GOI	Community resource Management Programme)(Natural Resource Based Programme)
12.	<b>Cultural heritage (and Creative Expression- Art, Music)</b>		CSOs	
13.	<b>Kheley India (Sports)</b>	Sports Academy (Sports Ecosystem)	Youth,GOI and Pvt	Central Sports University, Manipur
14.	<b>Mineral (Extractive) Economy</b>	North Easterns are hired as only Casual Labour	Pvts and GOI	
15.	<b>EODB</b>	SME Promotion	GOI	SFURTI (Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries) Programme
16.	<b>Smart Cities</b>	Jobs for Tech-Entrepreneurs, Circular Economy Jobs	GOI	

## 2. Mapping of identified Discourses, Mapping of Actors and Identification of Centre of Political Gravity and Entry Point:

The coordinates reflect the main contrasting outlooks on development, which are governed by different actors, logics and considerations. In order to reflect the conflict of inclusion and exclusion on the cultural axis, the participants chose the cultural conflict between **Universalist Outlook** (Development for All) and **Nationalist or Communal Identity Outlook** (Development for a few). On the material axis, the conflict between ‘**Equity or Sustainability**’ (ecology, sustainability) and ‘**GDP Growth first**’ was chosen.

The identified discourses were then placed on the discourse map. The majority of the discourses were placed in the ‘**third**’ and the ‘**fourth quadrant**’, with Communal Identity on the y-axis. On the x-axis, the discourses reflected both the outlooks, which is ‘**equity and sustainability**’ and ‘**GDP growth first**’.

The mapping exercise was followed by identification of the actors propelling the discourses. The discourses were largely driven by **government and political parties** (main players) and **civil society organizations and think tanks** (social groups). Most of the discourses are propelled by the government and the CSOs. The discourses driven by the government are placed in the first three quadrants, whereas the discourses propelled by the CSOs are largely placed in the fourth quadrant, reflecting the equity and sustainability outlook. Discourses on Sports Ecosystem, Mineral or extractive economy and Digital Connectivity were also propelled by **Private entities** (economic groups).

**Centre of Political Gravity** or the power centre helps to identify the opinions that carry more weight in the minds of the decision makers. The Centre of Political Gravity was also identified in the **third quadrant**. All the discourses in the fourth quadrant were propelled by the central government. The

participants believed that the political centre of gravity lied in the third quadrant as these discourses have gained considerable traction in the region.

The ultimate objective of the discourse mapping exercise is to deliberate and identify the **Entry Point** that will allow the change narrative to resonate with as many discourse communities as possible. The participants identified the Entry Point in the centre of the discourse map in order to access all the discourses and stakeholders.

### **III) Key Observations:**

1. The perspectives on job creation captured in the discussion are fairly contrasting as compared to the other regions of the country. A disconnect was observed between the narrative on job creation in the north-east and the other regions of the country. The discourses in the north-east largely reflect the communal identity outlook, whereas, the discourses in the rest of the country echo the universalist development sentiment.
2. From the discourse map, it is observed that although several discourses were propelled by the CSOs, the political gravity lied with the discourses propelled by the central government. Despite of a vibrant civil society movement in the region, they could not create the desired political mass and hence, the dominant discourses on job creation in the north-east are driven by the central government.
3. Further, it is also observed that the governments of the respective north-eastern states were largely absent in the deliberation on job-creation.

IV) Annexure 1:

