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## Ongoing Research Projects

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### **South Asia Research Network on Employment and Social Protection for Inclusive Growth (SARNET)**

**Collaboration/s:** Institute for Human Development (IHD), UN-ESCAP and ILO, with support from IDRC

**Project Director:** Professor Alakh N Sharma

**Project Coordinator:** Professor Dev Nathan

The main goal of the programme is 'Toward Inclusive Growth: Improving Employment and Social Protection Policies in South Asia'.

High rates of growth and growing openness in South Asia have raised expectations of better livelihoods and employment conditions. However, economic growth has not brought about a marked improvement in employment conditions, for a very large proportion of the work force which remains in poor-quality, low productivity employment in the informal part of the economy. A large majority of workers face insecurity of livelihood and vulnerability to contingencies, which reflects both the poor quality of the jobs they have and the absence of any institutionalized social security system. There, however, are variations in this situation in the different economies of South Asia. What this research programme addresses is the way the development priority of inclusive growth, or growth that produces good quality employment with increasing access of socially excluded sections to it, can be achieved. In order to find ways to improve the nature of growth, the project will take up two key research questions: What policies are needed to modify the growth paths in South Asia so as to increase formalization and the proportion of decent jobs? ;How can social protection policies be designed so that they contribute to the objectives of increasing both formalization and the proportion of decent jobs?

The activities and outputs under the project include: Country studies; Policy briefs; Flagship Publications : (i) South Asia Labour, Employment and Social Protection Report and (ii) Country Monographs, and India Labour and Employment Report; South Asia network; Data bank Internships and training in labour economics for young researchers in the region.

Institute for Human Development would join hands with research institutes to create a national database and consultations by the fellow-researchers under the programme leader and coordinator at Institute for Human Development.

#### Recent Activities of SARNET

- A two day Inception Workshop was organized by IHD on 21-22 May 2013 in collaboration with UN ESCAP, ILO with support from IDRC at the India International Centre, New Delhi to discuss the scope and modalities of the project. The participating countries were Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and the host country India.
- SARNET issued the first competitive call for papers on 'Labour Markets, Employment and Inclusive Growth in South Asia' for Young scholars (below the age of 35 years) of South Asian nationality (working either in the region or outside).

The topics and issues included,

- Pace and pattern of employment creation in South Asia during the last two to three decades and the kind of linkages that can be seen with growth performance
- Reasons for a high level of informalization of jobs in South Asia
- Policies and institutions needed to promote formalization
- Constraints to manufacturing growth in South Asia
- The dynamics of the emerging patterns of labour market inequality and social exclusion in South Asia
- Changes required in labour market institutions to generate high quality jobs that lead to growth for the promotion of inclusive development

Young South Asian scholars were invited to submit proposals for empirical papers, covering any or all of the major South Asian economies, including Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. A total number of 135 proposals were received. The proposals and submitted papers were reviewed by a committee of international experts. 10 top quality papers have been selected. SARNET reserves the right to publish accepted papers in some reputed journals and/or in a book. The selected candidates have been invited to write full papers which would be presented on 14 December 2013 at New Delhi.

Forthcoming Activity: SARNET is organizing a two-week training workshop on 'Contemporary Issues in Labour Economics' from 2 to 14 December, 2013. The course covers topics such as

macro-economics of employment; population and labour force; markets and wage determination; labour market institutions; inequality and labour market discrimination; and labour market policies. The course will deal with basic conceptual issues and also introduce appropriate methods for research. A set of internationally-renowned experts in labour economics will conduct the training. About 20 applicants will be selected for the training workshop.

### **Research Project on 'Development and Tribals in India'**

**Sponsor/s:** ICSSR

**Project Director/ Coordinator:** Dr. Harishwar Dayal

The research programme aims to study the major issues confronting the tribals in India, the reasons for their deprivation and the policy options to ameliorate their condition. The objectives of the study are to document and analyse the economic condition of the tribals, the status and issues of their livelihood, poverty and other forms of deprivation rampant among them; to examine and analyse the employment opportunities available to them, the wage rates they get, the incidence and nature of migration, especially distress migration prevalent among them, their health and nutritional status, issues of education, gender disparities and nature of governance, institutions and service delivery mechanism. The study will also try to document peoples' unrest and militant movement in the tribal areas and analyse the underlying causes behind them.

The themes covered under the study include: Development, Disparity and Livelihood; Labour Markets, Employment and Migration; Health and Nutrition; Education and Skill Development; Land, Forest and Natural Resources; Governance and Institutions; Women in Tribal Society; Peoples' Unrest and Militant Movements in Tribal Areas. At the end, an overview report will be prepared synthesizing all the eight projects and reports and highlighting policy recommendations.

## **Labour Market Inequality in Brazil and India**

**Sponsors:** IDRC; **Partner:** CEBRAP

**Project Director/Coordinator:** Professor Gerry Rodgers

Labour market inequality in Brazil and India is a comparative study, carried out by CEBRAP, São Paulo and the Institute for Human Development, New Delhi, with support from IDRC. This study is being done by a group of eminent researchers and experts of labour market both from Brazil and India.

The objectives of this research project are: to shed light on the determinants of levels and trends of labour market inequality through a comparison of Brazilian and Indian labour market structures and outcomes; to contribute to policy design and choice by assessing and comparing the impact of specific policy instruments in the two countries, and by engaging social actors in debate on the findings; to contribute to the development of methods of comparative research on labour market issues; to strengthen South-South research collaboration, by promoting interaction between the research communities in Brazil and India engaged in labour market analysis, and strengthening their capabilities.

The project will focus on five major axes of wage inequality, namely gender, race, regional differences, education and formal-informal employment. There are three dimensions to this study.

## **Poverty, Inequality and Violence in Urban India: Towards more Inclusive Urban Planning**

**Sponsors:** IDRC

**Project Director/Coordinator:** Dr. Preet Rustagi, Dr. Shreya Sarawgi, Ms. Shivani Satija in collaboration with CEPT, Ahmadabad (Dr. Darshini Mahadevia)

The exploratory study links the urban development processes with the emergence of a non-violent or safe city in the Indian context. The research work aims to extend the existing knowledge base on this topic in India. The objectives of the study are to understand the potential and possible pathways through which urban planning and its governance

mechanism become drivers of conflicts and violence; conversely to understand the potential of inclusive and participatory urban planning in facilitating social; inclusion; to fill gaps in existing research on issues of urban planning, conflict and violence and to contribute to the capacity building of young researchers in India on conducting research on sensitive topics like urban violence through innovative research tools including participatory methods. The study will comprise literature review on urban violence and setting up the research; involve inception of the research in the case study cities; involve primary research in the case study cities- quantitative and qualitative tools and will involve research findings dissemination and outreach.

### **Promoting Employment and Skills Development in Manufacturing Sector in India: Field Study**

**Sponsors:** ILO

**Project Director/Coordinator:** Professor Dev Nathan and Professor Sandip Sarkar

The broad objective of the study is to conduct primary survey based on qualitative and quantitative techniques to get relevant insights on employment and skill dimensions of the manufacturing sector along with binding constraints. The study will also aim to identify a set of policy recommendations for manufacturing firms and public authorities to have real opportunities to influence and increase the positive externalities that are associated with sourcing linkages in the local/national economy.

The study will identify two manufacturing sub sectors, one fast growing and another lagging behind. The sub sectors will be chosen on the basis of latest employment and unemployment round of NSSO. A technical study documenting the research question and motivation, methodology, data, analysis, key findings and recommendations for policy makers are the expected outputs of the project. A workshop to validate and discuss the findings of the study will be organized before submitting the final report.

## **'Post- Millennium Development Goals 2015'**

**Sponsors:** Wada Na Todb Abhiyan (WNTA)

**Project Director/Coordinator:** Dr. Sumit Mazumdar

The new framework stipulated to replace the existing set of eight Millennium Development Goals in 2015 is presently part of a major international development discourse. Since early 2012, the United Nations has been spearheading this process by holding a diverse set of activities and consultations, converging finally to inform the UN Secretary General's Report to the 68th UN General Assembly in September 2013. A Special Event on the MDGs (post-2015 agenda) is being held as part of the UN Assembly in 2013.

In order to strengthen the recommendations for a Southern-led, Southern-focused post-2015 development agenda globally, momentum needs to be built around shaping the agenda by engaging a distinguished set of stakeholders, and in this regard, the academic community plays a critical role as a key voice. Wada Na Todb Abhiyan (WNTA), a coalition of over 4000 civil society organizations in India, and the Institute for Human Development (IHD), New Delhi, a development policy think-tank, have jointly initiated a dialogue on the post-MDG 2015 development perspective involving leading academic scholars and experts from the global South.

In the first phase (now completed) 'Think Pieces' on themes including -Addressing Poverty & Inequality; Facilitating quality jobs, sustainable livelihoods & equitable growth path; Gender equality - rights and perspectives; Education; Food Security and Nutrition; Health and Global partnerships for development were invited from scholars and experts to share perspectives and insights to influence and shape the evolving dialogue on the new development agenda post-2015. The Draft 'Think-Pieces' have been compiled and will be widely circulated among national and international stakeholders, including policy-makers and agencies and also in the UN General Assembly, the proceedings of which will be witnessed by the Project Director in New York. The Think Pieces would be finally compiled into a volume and presented to the UN Secretary General's office, UN General Assembly.

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**Monitoring and Impact Assessment for the Project – SCQuIP – Jharkhand**

**Sponsor/s:** Navajbai Ratan Tata Trust

**Project Director/s:** Dr. Harishwar Dayal

The project aims to study the status and process of implementation of different components of 'School and Community based Quality Improvement Programme' (SCQuIP). The Impact assessment exercise will also study the actions undertaken and the problems experienced, in order to evaluate, guide and correct the design of the programme and decisions/actions taken for its successful implementation. The research process would entail research investigation, which would be carried out thrice a year. This will help in studying the effectiveness of the actions, process of change, the factors causing the change, the remedial measures and how effective have they been in resolving them. The Impact assessment report with a comprehensive chapter on findings of the study will be presented on the completion of the project. The project is being executed by IHD's Eastern Regional Centre.

**Evaluation Study on Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)-12 Districts of Uttar Pradesh**

**Sponsor/s:** Planning Commission, Government of India

**Project Director/s:** Dr. Harishwar Dayal

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is in operation since the last 5 years and huge funds are being utilized under the Act/Scheme. The evaluation aims to assess and review the implementing process of the awareness programmes and to find out whether the guidelines of the programme have opened the doors of convergence to other development programmes of the Central and the State Governments. The study looks into various aspects specially success in the creation and maintenance of assets and the implementation and the performance and impact of the scheme. The data is being generated primarily through sample surveys in the selected states which is being supplemented by the qualitative information on implementation and delivery of the intended benefits of the scheme. The evaluation study will be preceded by the review of literature.

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**Equity Impacts of a Targeted Health Insurance Scheme: New Evidence from India's RSBY**

**Sponsor/s:** Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)

**Project Director/s:** Dr. Sumit Mazumdar

The study has the broad aim to assess equity impacts of RSBY, the flagship health insurance scheme in India targeted to provide cashless hospitalization to poor beneficiary households. We compare summary indicators of equity in access to and financing of health expenses to assess changing equity scenario in poor households, based on a household survey in Delhi. Based on the programme evaluation framework, rigorous econometric techniques would be used to tease out impacts on equity that can be ascribed to RSBY enrolment. Complimentary impacts through spillover effects on utilization patterns, quality of care and household welfare consequences will be examined. Case studies will be developed to allow understanding pathways of equity impacts and functioning of the programme towards this end. The findings of the proposed study will provide key insights in assessing how far RSBY can be expected to reduce inequity and offer adequate financial safety-nets against severe health shocks among the poor.

Aims and objectives of the study is to analyze the changing pattern of employment and educational outcomes over the last decade using the Bihar programme survey data of two rounds – 1998 and 2011. The exercise pertains to estimation of inequality of opportunity, both across gender and at the household-level, with regard to educational and earning outcomes; and to explain changes in the contribution of opportunity inequality to total inequality in these outcomes over the past decade. It also aims to assess whether and how, infrastructural changes help in reducing barriers posed by unequal opportunity arising from gender and other clusters of vulnerability. These will be ascertained also through the qualitative insights based on perceptions of groups of women on aspects such as mobility, work, education and other social/economic spheres.

The methodology used for the study is based on mixed methods – quantitative as well as qualitative. It entailed detailed descriptive analysis of two rounds of data collected under the

Bihar Research Programme. On the basis of this, the Human Opportunity Index (HOI) was calculated to observe the nature of inequality in educational and labour market outcomes.

The report submitted to the World Bank contains the following research outputs: one, there have been remarkable improvements in enrolment levels of all children. Out of school children have declined and girls have benefitted much more than the boys overall. Inequality in enrolment has largely been reduced for all sections of the population. Given the much lower base value of enrolment among the lower and middle castes, the improvements in enrolment are higher among these sections of the population.

In case of attainment, the outcomes are not so positive. The HOI has decreased overtime indicating a fall in the availability of opportunities to complete primary education. Although, there have been increases in the attainment levels of females with many more women in the matriculation and above category compared to 1998 in 2009, the spread across social groups or class categories is not witnessed.

Employment in Bihar has largely been restricted to agriculture and related activities such as animal husbandry, both for men and women. Opportunities in the non-agricultural sector have been restricted to casual labour in construction, small trade/businesses, and some salaried employment. The probability of women's engagement in non-agricultural work, relative to men, increased from 0.13 to 0.28 between 1998 and 2011. The greatest impact is felt amongst the women of upper caste landed households.

In both time periods, the likelihood of the youth employment in the non-agricultural sector is the highest. Able bodied young men are seen migrating for work into various occupations ranging from hard manual labour in agriculture or construction to salaried jobs as security personnel, contractors and middlemen.

### **Inclusive Urban Development in Bihar: An Explanatory Study**

**Sponsor/s:** Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR)

**Project Director/ Coordinator:** Dr. Abhay Kumar and Ms. Nandita Gupta

The project aims to explore the overall pattern of urbanisation and rural–urban linkages in Bihar using both primary and secondary data. The project will feed into a longitudinal study being conducted by IHD in rural Bihar, the long term objective of which is to inform improved socio-economic development in Bihar. The project will also address lack of primary level scholarship on the rural-urban dynamics and urban centres by engaging in both qualitative and quantitative enquiries in two medium sized towns – Madhubani and Bihar Sharif. The outcome is expected to contribute to a better understanding of the reasons for slow urbanization in Bihar and the implications for the overall pace and pattern of development and poverty reduction. This in turn will help planners to design an effective urban development strategy and to map out future priorities and possibilities for research into urban development in the state.

### **Political Economy of Labour Market Regulation in India**

**Sponsor/s:** Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR)

**Project Director/ Coordinator:** Mr. Navin Chandra

The political economy of labour market regulations and concomitant institutions has not been systematically studied in India. Although some studies on the emergence and growth of labour movement exist, they do not try to analyze the developments from the perspective of political economy. They do deal with class struggle over labour market regulation but fail to elucidate how the class struggle and their outcomes were determined finally by the constraint of capital accumulation. This study is taken up to elucidate the dialectical development of labour market regulations in India through the dynamic but contradictory interactions of capital accumulation and the class struggle of labour and capital mediated by the state. The study may be useful for designing effective labour regulations for smooth functioning of the labour market.

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**Dalit Labour and Special Economic Zone: A Micro Study on the “Contested and Negotiated” Development in the NOIDA region, Uttar Pradesh (UP)**

**Sponsor/s:** Development Study Group, Department of Geography, University of Zurich, Switzerland

**Project Director/ Coordinator:** Dr. C. P Vinod

As part of ongoing research in India on the theme “Contested Rural Development” the project tries to understand the contestations happening around “Special Economic Zone” in NOIDA, Uttar Pradesh, with a focus on dalit labour. The study tries to comprehend whether the dalit labour can organize i.e whether social mobilization takes place; what kind of alternatives organizations/movements working on dalit labour rights purport as demands and arguments; whether these demands and propositions really represent the aspirations of dalit Labour. The study is expected to provide a comparative perspective in the broader context of National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) studies within India and South Asia. The study will also supplement the ongoing research project on contested rural development by analysing the development trajectory of dalit workers within an SEZ.

**Impact of Migration on Poverty: The case of construction workers of India, Nepal and Bangladesh**

**Sponsor/s:** University of Sussex

**Project Director/ Coordinator:** Dr. Ravi Srivastava

The main objective of this research is to study the conditions including the role of social networks, skill development, and social protection programmes-which lead to more favourable outcomes in terms of reducing poverty and vulnerability and improving the living and working conditions of the migrant workers in the construction industry and their families. The research focuses on lowly skilled workers following both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Three types of tools are being used namely; questionnaire survey, group discussions and in-depth case history of the migrants including observation of their living conditions in India, Nepal and Bangladesh. Expected outputs of the study include: Working papers, policy briefs and report dissemination.