

**South Asia Regional Conference on “Meeting the Challenges of Employment and Inclusive Growth in South Asia”**

**Organiser/s:** IHD, New Delhi under the auspices of SARNET

**Date:** 24-25 October 2015

The SARNET International Conference on “Meeting the Challenges of Employment and Inclusive Growth in South Asia” was held during 24-25 October 2015 at New Delhi. The Conference was organized by South Asia Research Network on Employment and Social Protection for Inclusive Growth (SARNET), which has been conceived and is being implemented by the Institute for Human Development (IHD), New Delhi in collaboration with UN-ESCAP and ILO, with support from IDRC and some important National Research Institutes in the various South Asian countries. The central output of the programme is the “South Asia Labour and Employment Report: Towards Inclusive Growth”.

The main objective of the workshop was to present and discuss the chapters of South Asia Labour Employment Report 2016 and India Employment Report 2016. Around 75 scholars from South Asia including eminent experts, civil-society representatives, policy-makers and development practitioners participated and shared their views on the report.

There were 10 sessions in the workshop. Out of 10 sessions, 8 sessions were for South Asia Labour Employment Report and 2 sessions were for India Employment Report. The debate and deliberations were substantially centered on ‘Demographic and Labour Market Trends in South Asia’, ‘Migration in South Asia: Trends and Policy Concerns’, ‘Growth, Employment and the Uncertain Path of Structural Transformation’, ‘Informal Sector in South Asia’, ‘Level of Income and Earnings and Inequality in South Asia’, ‘Gender Relations and Labour Markets’, ‘Macro Economic Policy, Growth and Employment in South Asia: Some Perspectives’, ‘Labour Market Regulations’, ‘Education and Skills’, ‘Social Protection’, ‘SARNET Data Bank’, ‘Challenges of Employment in India’, and ‘Manufacturing-led Growth in India: Issues and Perspectives’.

A panel discussion was organized on “Key Findings and Future Priorities for Research and Policy”. The panellists were Prof Alakh N Sharma, Prof. Gerry Rodgers, Prof. Abhijit Sen, Prof. Aliya Khan, Prof. Maitreyi Bordia Das, Rizwanul Islam, Pushp Raj Rajkarnikar and Sher Verick. The panelists mainly discussed about the value-addition of the South Asian Development reports; the shortcomings of the methods of comparing the different South Asian countries; the need of more research on the inclusiveness of growth, poverty, inequality and macroeconomic policy regimes; and how policy-makers could be made a part of the conversations which still are mainly confined to the academicians. This session was followed by the presentation of the draft India Employment Report 2016. The two reports will be revised based on the deliberations and suggestions made in the conference.