



News Analysis (06 Oct, 2018)

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'Future of Work in India' Report by WEF

Recently the "Future of Work in India" Report has been published by **World Economic Forum** in collaboration with the **Observer Research Foundation (ORF)** according to which the future of work in India is uncertain, but full of opportunities .

- **This report highlights the impact of transformative technology in India on job creation, workplaces, employment trends and relations, and the nature of work itself.**
- Further it found that companies in India are optimistic about the future and are open to the possibilities presented by new technologies and digitisation which is likely to stimulate innovation and adoption of new technology and drive transformation, growth and progress.
- **The report has found that companies in India experiencing the highest growth prefer hiring men and that technology led job growth benefits men more than women** which is a big reason to worry for India's drive towards gender equity and women empowerment.

Key Insights

- **Companies anticipate job creation not job loss:** Contrary to widespread concern that machines and technology are displacing human workers, companies are hiring additional workers owing to the adoption of industrial technologies and machinery in the last five years and they expect this trend to continue in the medium term. If managed carefully, technological disruptions in India can in fact lead to the creation of sufficient gainful employment opportunities for the growing working-age population.
- **Companies recognise the potential of the Internet of Things (IoT) and big data:** Companies have reported that aspects of IoT are present in their companies or that they are planning to introduce aspects of it in the next five years. Similarly there is a growing trend of the use of big data.

- **Skills gaps and financial constraints are the main barriers to technology adoption:** Companies reported a lack of know-how among their employees as the most important barrier to technology adoption along with lack of investment capital in newer technologies.
- **Retraining and learning on the job to address changing skill requirements:** Companies plan to address gaps in knowledge and skills internally through retraining existing workers in new capabilities, or having employees learn new requisite skills on the job.
- **Companies are hiring, but not women:** The inclusion of women in the labour market in India is both a social and an economic imperative. **The IMF estimates that India would be 27 percent richer if there was equal participation of women in the workforce.** Despite years of high growth in India, women are severely under-represented in the labour market. In fact, India has seen a decline in female labour-force participation in recent decades. Today, it stands at a mere 27 percent. This is one of the lowest in the world, with a global average of 49 percent.
- **Contractualisation is increasing:** The drivers of contractualisation include stringent labour regulations, the **wage differential between permanent workers and contract workers (which is one and a half times greater for permanent workers on average)**, increasing import competition, and the lack of bargaining power of contract workers compared to that of the unionised and regular workforce.
- **There is a significant need to rethink worker protections, security and benefits:** The existing provisions of worker protection and benefits like paid annual leave, paid sick leave, both for permanent and contract workers, is grossly insufficient.
- **An independent future:** Independent work is on the rise in many advanced economies across Europe and the United States. Similarly in India, freelancing is becoming increasingly common. For individuals, however, working as a freelance worker has both advantages and disadvantages. Some of the advantages include flexibility in working hours, the ability to work remotely, and the autonomy and control that self-employment enables. On the other hand, work hours can be long and unpredictable, diminished employment rights such as paid sick leave etc.

Way Forward

- Economic growth is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for job creation. **It is estimated that India must create more than 8.4 million jobs a year to maintain its current employment rate.** With the current rate of job creation per percentage point of economic growth, the country will need to grow at a rate of more than 10 percent.
- Creation of decent jobs with better wages, security, protections and safety, are necessary for improving individual and household welfare and well-being.
- It is high time to ensure equal opportunities for women, youth and other marginalised communities who were previously unable to participate equally in the paid economy.

- India needs to establish an ecosystem better equipped to prepare the workforce for changing skill and educational requirements.
 - Creation of an inclusive policy environment which balances the need for job creation with the interests of workers is also urgently required.
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ICMR Recommends Vaccine for Lions

The Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) has confirmed that the Canine Distemper Virus (CDV) was responsible for lion deaths in the Gir forest of Gujarat and recommended that the remaining lions be vaccinated to prevent further outbreaks.

- This goes against recommendations by wildlife biologists that wild animals shouldn't be vaccinated as it may compromise their immunity against future infections.
- Laboratory tests have confirmed that four of the 23 lions had been infected by the Canine Distemper Virus (CDV) while 10 others had been infected Babesia protozoa, an infection spread by tick parasite.
- Apart from vaccination, ICMR has also recommended that the animals should be placed in 2-3 different sanctuaries.
- The devastating link between the CDV and potential epidemics has been known since 1994, when within the Serengeti-Mara ecosystem of East Africa (Tanzania) nearly a third of the lion population died or disappeared.
- The same pattern is being repeated in Gujarat today, with the forest department confirming the spread of the CDV from dogs to the lions.

Issue of Relocation of Lions

- The 2015 lion census by the Gujarat government showed that it was home to 523 lions, a 27% increase compared with the 2010 Census.
- The population of lions has started spilling outside the protected areas and one-third of the 523 lions in the region are living outside the core, making them susceptible to viruses.
- Experts say the paucity of big animals inside the park's wildlife area, their increasing dependence on domestic cattle and congestion are some reasons for the spread of CDV.
- Also because of rapid urbanisation in the area, large influx of human population has increased man-animal conflicts. Therefore, the government also needs to give more support to the local community for better conservation of lions.
- Moreover, it is also a question of genetic diversity. A species which is bottle-necked, becomes more susceptible to disease. The risks to population also include catastrophes like a forest fire or an extreme weather event.

- Earlier in September 2011, the Centre for Animal Disease Research and Diagnosis (CADRAD), Bangalore, and Indian Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI), Uttarakhand, analysed tissues from a 2007 Gir lion carcass. They found the presence of highly contagious peste des petits ruminants virus (PPRV) which is also highly contagious and carries an 80-100% chance of mortality.

The Legal Tussle

- In 1990, the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) proposed the creation of a second wild population of Asiatic lions to safeguard the species against potential calamities in Gujarat's Gir National Park. It favoured shifting of about 40 lions from Gujarat to Madhya Pradesh's Palpur Kuno sanctuary.
- Gujarat, however, refused to part with 19 animals for an initial relocation plan.
- In 2013, the Supreme Court ruled that Gujarat needed to relocate some of its lions to neighbouring Madhya Pradesh to avoid the possibility of disease or some other disaster wiping out the entire population.
- The Gujarat government refused to translocate the lions to Kuno in Madhya Pradesh over concerns of its co-existence with the tiger, insufficient prey density and the difference in the climatic condition of Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh.

Canine Distemper Virus

- Canine distemper virus is known mainly to cause a severe infection in dogs respiratory, gastrointestinal, respiratory and central nervous systems, as well as the conjunctival membranes of the eye.
- CDV may also affect wild carnivores such as wolves, foxes, raccoons, red pandas, ferrets, hyenas, tigers, and lions.
- The prevalence of this virus and its diversity in wildlife of India is not adequately studied.
- A lion does not eat the entire prey at one go. In between, the dogs consume the kill and infect it with the CDV. Once the lion returns to finish it off, it gets the deadly disease.
- The CDV is more dangerous for lions than tigers. This is because lions move together in large numbers, making them more vulnerable to the virus as compared to tigers that are more isolated and territorial animals.

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Important Facts for Prelims (06th October 2018)

GI Tag for Alphonso Mangoes

- Alphonso from Ratnagiri, Sindhudurg, Palghar, Thane and Raigad districts of Maharashtra, have been given Geographical Indication tag (GI).
- Alphonso, better known as 'Hapus' in Maharashtra, is in demand in domestic and international markets not only for its taste but also for pleasant fragrance and vibrant colour.

GI Tags

- GI is an indication used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin.
- Such a name conveys an assurance of quality and distinctiveness which is essentially attributable to its origin in that defined geographical locality.
- For a product to get GI tag, the goods need to be produced or processed or prepared in that region.
- As a form of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), GI are distinct from other forms like patents, trademarks and copyrights because the ownership of rights in this case is with a "community" or a "group of people" rather than an individual or a corporate or non-corporate firm as might be the case with other IPRs.
- As a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), India enacted the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration & Protection) Act, 1999, which has come into effect from 2003.
- The Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 aims to provide registration and protection of GI goods in India.
- This Act is administered by the Controller General of Patents, Designs and Trademarks, who is also the Registrar of Geographical Indications.
- The geographical indications registry for India is located at Chennai.
- Darjeeling Tea, Mahabaleshwar Strawberry, Blue Pottery of Jaipur, Banarasi Sarees and TirupatiLaddus, Banaganapalle mangoes are some of the GIs.

Methanol Cooking Fuel Program

- The state-owned company- Northeast and Assam Petro-chemicals, launched **Asia's first canisters based** and **India's first "Methanol Cooking Fuel Program"**.
- The pilot project will include 500 households inside the Assam Petro Complex, which will be later scaled up to 40,000 households in Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Telangana, Goa and Karnataka.
- The safe handling canister based cooking stoves are from **Swedish Technology** and through a technology transfer a large-scale cooking stove manufacturing plant will come up in India in the next 18 months producing 10 lakh Cookstoves and 1 Crore Cannisters per year.
- This technology is very unique, it handles methanol extremely safely, does not need regulator or any piping system.

- The gaseous form, Methanol - Dimethyl Ether (DME), can be blended in 20% ratio with LPG. LPG-DME blending program is expected to kickstart in the country by 2019.
 - The cooking medium can directly substitute LPG, Kerosene, Wood, Charcoal and any other fuel for cooking.
 - 1.2 litres canisters can last for full five hours on twin burners and 8 such canisters as rack can last for one month for a family of three. The cost of energy equivalent of one cylinder of LPG for Methanol is Rs. 650, compared to Rs. 850 per cylinder resulting in a minimum of 20% Savings.
 - For instance, in Manipur the cost of transportation of LPG is Rs. 200, whereas same cost for Methanol will be Rs. 12. This provides for an excellent alternative as household fuel and commercial, institutional and fuel for restaurants.
 - This step is in direction of reducing import of crude and an effort to provide clean, import substitute, cost effective and pollution free cooking medium.
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