

A Study on Labour and Workforce in India

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ABSTRACT:

Labour and workforce play the most important role in the economic growth and development of a country. Without labour no production, no services, no industry, and no economic activity can sustain. In developing countries like India, labour force is extremely large, diverse and informal in nature. Workforce includes all persons who are engaged in some economic activity either physically or mentally. In India a huge proportion of the workforce works in unorganized sector where job security, stable income, better working conditions and legal protection are very limited. This situation also creates problems such as low wages, labour exploitation, lack of awareness about labour rights, migration problems and skill gap. Due to globalization, privatization and modernization, the labour systems in India have been changing continuously. Automation, digital economy and gig economy are now becoming major occupational platforms. Technology is replacing physical jobs and demanding more skilled workers.

The labour laws are being simplified combined and modernized by the government through labour codes to protect workers but also promote ease of doing business. Workforce participation especially women workforce participation is relatively low. The unemployment problem especially among youth is rising. Skilled labour shortage exists despite huge working population because of mismatch of education with industry needs.

Therefore, this study tries to understand the nature of Indian labour force different issues faced by workers, limitations in labour policies, trend changes happening due to technology and globalization and suggests methods to improve the labour conditions so that India can achieve sustainable development, productivity growth and future ready workforce. This research is prepared using only secondary data sources.

KEYWORDS:

Labour Force, Unorganized Sector, Skill Mismatch, Gig Economy, Labour Codes.

Introduction

Labour is considered as one of the major factors of production along with land. Capital and entrepreneurship. Labour means the human effort used in producing goods and services. Workforce or labour force of a country shows how strong the country's economic capacity is. The stronger the workforce, the stronger the productivity and GDP of the country will become. India has the second largest population in the world and therefore the workforce population is very huge. This provides a great demographic advantage for India. But this large workforce is not fully utilized due to unemployment. Underemployment, lack of skills, lack of formal jobs, informal labour sector, and poor labour protections/

In India approximately more than 80% of the workforce is engaged in unorganized sector. This means workers like construction labour, agriculture labour, daily wage labour, gig workers, small shop helpers, street vendors etc., Face insecure jobs and do not get benefits like PF, ESI, permanent employment, paid leaves, pension, health safety or stable income. Also female labour force participation rate in India is comparatively low as compared to global standards. This is due to social restrictions, lack of safety in workplace, family responsibilities, lack of flexible work, wage gaps etc.

The Indian government is continuously reforming labour laws to support workers but also attract industry investment. Four labour codes were introduced- wages code, industrial relations code, social security code and occupational safety and working conditions code. These codes are meant to simplify 29 old labour laws and create uniformity and transparency. India also focuses on skill development through programs like Skill India Mission, PMKVY etc.

Globalization and technological disruption are changing labour patterns rapidly. The new labour economy is shifting towards gig economy (Swiggy, Zomato, Ola, Uber etc.) Platform work, remote working IT based services, AI based workforce, data economy etc. Therefore Indian labour policy must be futuristic and flexible.

Objectives of the study

1. To study the meaning and importance of labour and workforce in India.
2. To understand current workforce structure and issues faced by labour in India.
3. To study the impact of globalization and technology transformation on labour.

4. To examine government steps. Policies and labour law reforms.
5. To identify challenges and limitations related to labour conditions in India.
6. To provide suggestions for improving labour welfare skill development and employment opportunities

Research Methodology

The data was collected using secondary sources such as Research papers, Journals, Online news articles, websites.

Limitations of the study

1. Only secondary data has been used, so primary worker experience is not included
2. Some data related to informal labour sector is not fully accurate in reports.
3. The labour market is dynamic, and fast changing trends may change soon.
4. Technological influence is fast growing and many future changes cannot be fully predicted at present.
5. The study is focused on Indian context mainly and comparison with other nations is limited.

Findings of the study

1. Indian labour workforce is massive but majority is unorganized and informal.
2. Youth unemployment and skill mismatch are serious concerns.
3. Women workforce participation is low compared to developed nations.
4. Labour exploitation still exists in many low wage sectors like construction, mining, agriculture etc.
5. Labour laws are being modernized but implementation level is still weak.
6. Gig workers and platform workers are becoming very large part of new economy but social security protection is limited for them.
7. There is high regional inequality of labour opportunities– urban areas have better formal jobs but rural areas still depend on informal agriculture work.
8. Indian education system needs more skill based training rather than only theoretical learning.

Suggestions

1. Government should strengthen implementation of Labour Codes in all states effectively/
2. Skill development programs must be industry-linked and political-based.
3. Social security schemes should cover gig workers and platform workers also.
4. MSMEs should get support and incentives to generate employment.
5. Women participation should be encouraged through flexible working safety measures and equal wage.
6. Digital literacy, AI skills and tech skills must be promoted for future

workforce preparation.

7. Labour inspection system should be smart, transparent and anti-corruption in nature.
8. More awareness program should be made for labour rights and legal protections,

Conclusion

Labour and workforce are the backbone of Indian economic development. India has the world advantage of young population but if not properly trained and given proper opportunities, it can turn into unemployment burden. Therefore India must make labour sector reforms more effective, improve skill education, reduce exploitation in informal sector provide modern digital training, and promote women workforce equally. Future work models will rely heavily on technology, robotics, AI and gig based services. So India must prepare its labour force for competitive global economy. Balanced labour protection and industrial growth both are necessary to create sustainable economic development.

References:

1. Ministry of Labour & Employment Government of India–Official website
2. World Bank Labour Market Data
3. Economic Survey of India

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Conflict of interest:

The Authors have no conflict of interest to declare that they are relevant to the content of this article.

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