



**Building Knowledge
for Human Development**

**Undertaking
and Promoting Research**

Building Research Networks

**Disseminating Information
and Knowledge**

**Engendering Debates
and Discussions**

**IHD –PLAN OF ACTION
2023–2030**



**INSTITUTE FOR
HUMAN
DEVELOPMENT**
Celebrating 25 Years

Since 1998

BACKGROUND

Since the implementation of economic reforms in the early 1990s, the Indian economy has experienced rapid economic growth. It is now one of the fastest growing economies of the world. Consequently, there have been considerable improvements in the standard of living of various population groups and a significant decline in poverty levels. However, India continues to score poorly in terms of human development indicators. Economic growth in the country, while fairly high, has not resulted in commensurate growth of decent employment.

In addition, an overwhelming majority of the population is deprived of social protection. The delivery of social services like healthcare, nutrition and education has been expanding over time but, in most parts of the country, the quality of these services remains low. Human development in India, thus, has not kept pace with economic growth.

The nature of growth has demonstrated that the obstacles to improving human development indicators in the country will not be solved through economic growth alone, nor even through the existing set of human development interventions.

Further, the impact of climate change on the entire world and the need to look at issues using a sustainable development lens has been increasingly brought home by recent climate change phenomena such as flash floods, forest fires, widespread droughts, cloudbursts and torrential rains. The Sustainable Development framework demonstrates how the human development issues are inextricably linked to the health of the planet and the environment.

Given the above backdrop, there is a need for better policy measures and improved policy design in a number of areas. Economic and social policies must complement and reinforce each other so as to be able to increase the impact of growth on human development and maintain sustainability at the same time. The plan prepared by IHD for its research and other activities in the coming years is rooted in this new economic and social scenario.

IHD VISION

The Institute for Human Development is committed to quality research for inclusive growth and development. It aims to excel in academic and policy research and contribute in building an equitable society that fosters social and economic inclusion.

IHD'S STRENGTH

Ever since its foundation in 1998, under the auspices of the Indian Society of Labour Economics (ISLE), IHD has focused its activities on topics related to human development. The Institute has completed about 400 research projects, sponsored by both national and international organizations; organized over 200 events including seminars, workshops, conferences and policy dialogues; and implemented training and capacity building activities. Furthermore, the Institute participates in a wide array of networks, both in India and abroad.

IHD has developed a number of competencies, among which the salient ones are as follows:

- **Research into the main dimensions of human development;**
- **Primary survey-based research to analyse policy impacts and social and economic change;**
- **Monitoring and evaluation research of development interventions;**
- **Capacity to mobilize State and non-State actors and engage them in policy debates;**
- **Ability to provide a critical and independent view on development issues;**
- **Conversion of research findings into educational and training material;**
- **Networking at national and international levels;**
- **High level publications, including two journals: the Indian Journal of Labour Economics and the Indian Journal of Human Development.**



RESEARCH THRUSTS

Growth and Employment

Employment is key to inclusive growth. The Institute plans to expand its work on how to make growth inclusive, employment-intensive and sustainable while taking into account the needs and constraints of globalization. The latest technological solutions made possible by the innovations in AI, robotics and genetics are transforming the nature of work across sectors ranging from farms to factories and services. These developments are expected to influence significant changes both in the economy and world of work. We are already witnessing these changes in employment with the advent of automation in manufacturing and services, proliferation of gig economy and 'hybrid' work arrangements. While expanding its scope of research in these new areas, the Institute will continue to address the underlying issues of inequality and social exclusion, and assess the impact of the recent changes in the employment landscape. It will look into persistent dichotomies such as formal/informal, explore gender inequity, slow growth of formal employment, and regional patterns of labour markets and labour mobility. The now often neglected theme of employment relations, both in formal and informal sectors, will also be studied. An important area of research will be to examine the roles of agriculture, manufacturing and services in ushering in a labour-intensive and sustainable growth path. While designing the studies on the above issues, the macro perspective (macro-economic policies, fiscal policies etc.) will be explicitly kept in view which is extremely important for policies as well as holistic understanding of human development. India is witnessing significant demographic transformation and it is important to study its implications for work and economic growth.

Education and Skills



The theme of education encompasses all levels from pre-school to higher education. IHD will focus its research on issues of inequality in access to education, quality of education and learning outcomes. The School to Work transition will also be

an important research area. Understanding the linkages between, on the one hand, education and vocational training and, on the other hand, the organized and unorganized labour markets is important in a country with a large segment of youthful population. Vocational training has very low uptake in India and needs to be strengthened. Research on vocational training and skill development thus assumes great relevance. It is well-known that disproportionately fewer girls study STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) subjects compared to boys. Evidence from research in this area can provide pointers redressing such gender imbalance in education. Finally, IHD plans to look into the interaction between research and innovation in educational systems and the productive capacity of the economy and society. The insights from these studies would contribute to policy reform.



Health and Nutrition

The research undertaken at IHD on the subjects of healthcare and nutrition is guided by its underlying three core approaches of generating evidence, monitoring and evaluating progress and impacts, and facilitating capacity building. It aims to contribute to the strengthening of health and nutrition systems in the future through the critical analysis of key policies. Five priorities have been identified around the emerging challenges and opportunities in the Indian health system: inclusive healthcare, service delivery, financing healthcare systems, monitoring of health systems, and improvement in child nutrition and care practices. The demographic changes necessitate more research on health issues of the aged population and their social problems.



Gender and Development

IHD seeks to foreground gender in all its research themes and also prioritize the following specific areas in its research on gender and development. The first concerns the institutions and structures that affect women in their everyday lives. Legislation and affirmative action constitute important means for the advancement of women, and in this context the Institute will carry out evaluations of government programmes and policies. The second theme

focusses on women's work and employment in both traditional and modern sectors, women work participation, paid and unpaid care work, etc. The third theme centres on enhancing capabilities (in particular through education and healthcare). And the last theme looks into gender inequality and discrimination more broadly, and women's wellbeing and violence against women in particular, including workplace harassment, violence at homes and in public spaces.



Vulnerability and Social Protection

The sources of human insecurity and vulnerability in India are multiple. Some are structural (patriarchy, under-development, lopsided development), others conjunctural (natural disasters, recent pandemic experience, climate-change related major events). In recent years, growth, globalization and climate change have tended to exacerbate inequalities and vulnerabilities, and have also created new risks and insecurities. International competition has resulted in greater financial and market volatility. The precariousness of employment has increased and the social protection of workers has diminished. The questions of poverty, inequality and development are central and continue to be overarching research themes. Additionally, IHD plans to work on the various types of vulnerability that threaten livelihoods and analyse the factors and processes leading to conflict as well as those fostering social cohesion.



Governance and Institutions

IHD's future activities will address the following topics: the roles of State and non-State actors such as Panchayati raj institutions, self-help groups, non-government organizations; the effectiveness of alternative ways of delivering social programmes such as targeted versus universalized programmes, cash transfers versus kind transfers; and some new themes such as the implication of rising social awareness, the impact of the mass media and the changing patterns of labour movements. The Institute has conducted a large number of development evaluation of various social and economic programmes, both at central and state levels. IHD future activities will include strengthening its capacity in development evaluation.



Climate change and environmental sustainability

There has been steady increase in the frequent extreme weather events such as record high or low temperatures, persistent heatwaves, widespread droughts etc. It is affecting production and income as well as livelihoods. There is paucity of knowledge regarding the potential impacts of these phenomena. There has been increasing need to prioritize and act to mitigate climate change impacts in the developing world. Climate shocks threaten livelihoods and increase vulnerabilities and these are disproportionately faced by those populations immediately dependent on farming and environmental resources. IHD would expand its research to focus on the impacts of climate change on livelihoods and employment, and for promoting policies towards climate resilience and environmental sustainability.



TEACHING AND TRAINING

The Institute will organize regular training courses and workshops on research methodologies pertaining to the issues of labour, employment and human development. IHD would make efforts to establish a separate vertical to exclusively focus on undertaking training activities. Capacity building of development researchers, advocacy groups, policy-makers and practitioners, especially in the areas of labour law and social security, social protection, healthcare and nutrition, will be undertaken through workshops and the development of a training curriculum. In addition, the Ph.D. programme courses (in Labour Economics and Human Development) that IHD had conducted in collaboration with the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) earlier attempted to be revived and be strengthened.



PUBLIC DEBATES AND POLICY DIALOGUES

IHD's programme of high-level public debates on topical academic and policy issues will be further developed. In addition to the two-lecture series—the Foundation Lecture and Distinguished Lecture—interactive

dialogues on issues of current policy concerns will be organized, whereby representatives of academia, policy-makers, development practitioners, social activists, labour representatives, and trade and industry associations will be engaged in constructive debates.



PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKING

IHD already benefits from a well-established range of partnerships and networks. It plans to expand and strengthen it further in India, South Asia and other countries, particularly the developing countries. Long-term relationships will also be forged with new institutions to facilitate work in the emerging topics of common interest. Collaborative research projects and the joint organization of seminars/workshops/conferences will be undertaken and the exchange of scholars between partner institutions will be encouraged.



COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH

Apart from its newsletter and various publications, including books, monographs, and working papers, the Institute plans to bring out a series of policy briefs. The key findings of the relevant project reports, seminars and workshops, conferences and policy debates will be disseminated through both printed (English and Hindi) and electronic means. The Institute's website will be made dynamic and interactive. Efforts will also be made to disseminate the findings of research undertaken at IHD and its other activities through both mainstream and social media. Faculty members of the Institute will be encouraged to publish the outcomes of their research in newspapers as well as in academic journals.

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