

IHD SILVER JUBILEE LECTURE SERIES

Lecture Abstract



Understanding the Global Distribution of Routine and Nonroutine Work

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Studies of the effects of technology and globalization on employment and inequality commonly assume that the tasks required in specific occupations are identical around the world. To relax this assumption, Professor Park and coauthors develop a regression-based methodology to predict the country-specific Routine Task Intensity (RTI) of occupations based on survey data collected in 46 low-, middle- and high-income countries. They find that within the same occupation jobs in low- and middle-income countries are more routine intensive than in high-income countries and that cross-country differences in RTI are strongly associated with technology, followed by skills, globalization, and economic structure. Using predicted country-specific RTI measures for 87 countries that together employ more than 2.5 billion workers, they show that from 2000 to 2017 the shift away from routine work and towards non-routine work in low- and middle-income countries was much slower than in the high-income countries, leading to a growing global divergence in the skill content of work. Professor Park will conclude with a discussion of the implications of the research for understanding changes in the demand for skills in India.