

Role of Cell Phone in Creating Coveted Mobility in JOB Viewing the Current Employment Challenges in Service Economy

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Abstract

The paper investigates the obstacles to youth employment in India. It draws insights from various case studies across the world and has put a reflection of the experience of Bolivia in Latin America and the services that are offered by the companies such as Assured Labor, Babajob, LabourNet and Souktel. There are several existed innovative model induced by globalization and technological advancement which can be emulated to create job for poor and marginalized groups of women and youth in developing countries. The paper also discussed employment prospects and employment protection in different social security schemes and active labor protection measures that brought in by the Government of India.

Keywords: Youth Employment, Employment Challenges, Active Labour Market Policies, Indian Labour force, Local Economy, Information Services, Mobile Phone For Job Creation, Mobile Phone Technology, Cell Phone And Mobility

Introduction

In the OECD countries, more than one in eight of all 15 to 24 year olds are not employed, educated, or trained (McKinsey report, 2014). According to International Labour Organisation (ILO) survey, 75 million young across the world are unemployed including triple of underemployed youth (ILO, 2013). McKinsey estimate reports that there will be a global shortfall of 85 million high- and middle-skilled workers by 2020.

As per the report of Confederation of Indian Industry (2014), India is going to host world's largest numbers of younger population by 2020. Reports have said that five years of Atal Bihari Vajpayee-led Government (1999-2004) created 5.4 crore jobs while the first seven years of Congress-led UPA regime (2004-2011) could manage to generate merely 1.5 crore jobs (Planning commission, 2002). During 2009-10 to 2011-12, total employment in India expanded from by a much healthier 13.9 million, although many of these jobs are in the informal economy. In India, 21.2 per cent of working men (aged 15-59) had a regular salaried job during the period 2011-12 (ILO, 2013). The informal employment counts for 94 percent of the labor force is growing faster than formal employment in India (ILO, 2013).

India has the largest population of youth in the world with about 66% of the population under the age of 35, so impact of declining financial market is the worst in India. Alongside high working poverty, young people are facing a dangerous mix of high unemployment, increased inactivity and hazardous work in developed countries. Unemployment is a situation when a capable and willing to do job workforce does not get work. Countries with prolonged high levels of youth unemployment is a threat to social instability. It can also result in a vicious circle of intergenerational poverty and social exclusion and can lead to family and societal decay. Lack of employment opportunities may give birth many psychological issues among unemployed and may cause many social ills such as theft, drug taking, crime, violence, juvenile delinquency, health as well.

The labour bureau's report (2012), on Youth Employment and Unemployment Scenario 2012-2013 shows the unemployment rate among illiterate youth is lower than educated youth. The ILO has cautioned against 'scarred generation' of youth who face the combination of increased indolence, unwarranted work, high unemployment as conditioned by high poverty in developed countries (ILO, 2013). Long-term youth unemployment drains the motivation and ambition of youth and makes them more cynical

The UN secretary general has made working with and for young people one of his top priorities in his five-year action agenda. In all the high-level panel discussions on the post-2015 development agenda, 'reducing youth unemployment' was prioritized more to end extreme poverty and to boost sustainable economic growth. Governments of all member states of UNO commit themselves to adopt full and effective youth participation agendas at all levels of government by addressing the social, economic and political issues that concern young people and children. The member States of ILO's, unanimously adopted a "Global Jobs Pact" in June 2009 during International Labor Conference (Mitra, & Verick, 2013). The Pact recalls the emphasize on fundamental rights such as right to work, right to have social protection, promotion of gender equality, participation and social dialogue which are critical to economic security of the labour force.

Overview of employment scenario in rural and urban India

Many northern and eastern States of India such as Bihar, UP, West Bengal, Odisha and Jharkhand are characterized by agriculture-based economy with surplus workforce. Economic backwardness of most of the

northern and eastern States leads to massive migration of population causing a huge burden on the economy of the industrially-developed states such as Maharashtra, Gujarat, Delhi, and Karnataka and so on.

The current number of unemployed in India is estimated to range between 25 and 35 million (Sharma 2014). The unemployment rate in India was respectively 3.5 per cent, 3.6 per cent and 3.7 per cent in 2011, 2012 and 2013 as per ILO survey (Mitra & Verick, 2013). The five year period falling between 2004-05 and 2009-10, 2.7 million new jobs were created where as in the previous five years 60 million new jobs were created (NSSO Report, 2012), which shows that employment elasticity during the said period has been close to zero.

According to Labour Bureau's Employment & Unemployment Survey for 2012-13, unemployment rate amongst illiterate youth is lower than educated youth in India. ^[1] As per the TOI report, "state wise unemployment figures reveal that while most states have approximately the same proportion of households with some member unemployed as the national average, some states have much higher rates ("Jobs only", 2009).

The unemployment rates for young male graduates in the 15-29 years age group in urban India was as high as 16.3% in contrast to the 2.5% of unemployment rate among illiterate men of the same age bracket in 2011-12. Unemployment rate in Assam was recorded as 4.3% whereas the state of Kerala, the most literate state in India had the highest record of unemployment close to the rate of 10% (Labour Bureau report, 2013).

Overall unemployment rate among females was 7.2% in comparison to 4% of unemployment for male in the year 2013. In contrast to 35 lakh women who were added to the workforce in urban areas, around 90 lakh women lost their jobs in two years in rural sector in India (Labour Bureau report, 2013).

The current work force in India has grown by 7 million persons per year out of which about 56% are engaged in agriculture as their primary occupation which has descended from early 65% in 1990s. Another 13 per cent are engaged in manufacturing sector and the rest are employed in the service sector, which has grown from 25 per cent to 32 per cent of total employment over the past two decades. 52 per cent of total 47.2 crore workforce at the all India level is self-employed while 18 per cent work as regular wage/salaried employees and 30 per cent as casual labourers (NSSO Report, 2012). Jobs in informal or unorganized sector counts for 92 percent, while organized sector provides less than 8 per cent of the total jobs, out of which private firms provided about 3 percent of jobs and remaining 5 percent catered in the public sector. (Ministry of Science & Technology, 2006).

However, only 6-8 per cent of India's workforce has received formal training in vocational skills, compared to 60 per cent or more in developed countries. Experts suggest that youths in the age group of 18-25 years, despite being skilled, are rendered jobless due to shrinking employment opportunities in the country.

Work in self-employed group and that of the casual laborers is of low quality, which offer a very poor income and generally forces a big portion of the workforce to move out of their native places in search for better jobs opportunities.

There has been a staggering increase in the number of colleges in India over the past decade (Deloitte Report, 2013) with an attempt to cash in on the "ambitious" and aspirational Indian youth. The number of Colleges have been increased from 12,806 to 35,539 in 2000-01 whereas number of universities have grown to 700 in 2013 from 256 in 2000-01. The increase in the number of universities has resulted dramatic improvement (obviously) in the gross enrolment ratio (GER) in higher education from 0.40 per cent in 1950-51, to 19.4 per cent in 2012-13. Mushrooming of large number of unregulated private institutes in India conferring technical degrees and diplomas has not suited to the job demands of modern economy. As per the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), about 62 per cent of the universities and 90 percent of the colleges were rated average or below average on specific quality parameters. A study by the National Association of Software Service Companies (NASSCOM) reveals that only 25 percent of engineering graduates are readily employable in the industry.

It has been found that agriculture as the sector with highest amount of job opportunities for youth in the country. Around 435 per 1000 the youth of the age bracket of 18- 29 are employed in the field of agriculture, forestry and fishing. However, 54 agricultural universities register only 0.5 percent enrolment in India (NSS Report, 2013).

Nearly 27 percent of India's population are migrants who move from rural to urban area including those who move from one urban to another urban area. The net migration from rural to urban areas is approximately 2 million per annum, of which about 1 million are job seekers. Approximately, 57 percent of urban male migrate to a different urban place for seeking better employment opportunities (Pompa , 2014).

A reflections of the job related challenges in India

Monster and Naukri's Employment Index and Job Speak Index ^[2] respectively have indicated the decline of job creation in India. The influence of the global economic condition leads Indian employers to post less number of jobs in the job portal. Moreover, unpaid education loan in the category of personal loan has been almost doubled in the past four years as per the stats of Reserved Bank of India. The increased number of nonpayers of education loan clearly indicates the depraved state of unemployment in India especially for job seeker students (Kaur,

2013).

The changing structure of economy requires skilled personnel instead of unskilled intellectuals to get an entry into the labour market in the non-agriculture sector. Access to labour market is co-related with possession of specific skills in addition to education. Poverty has been the greatest hurdles regarding skill formation for the youth in India. Lack of quality education and skill based training, on job training and practical exposure to work are the obvious resultant challenges owing to poverty against youth employment.

It is observed that a number of employment opportunities that are spontaneously generated by many processes in the existed structures of the society are unaware of and are not often well documented. The type and quality of employment does not match the expectations of many educated job seekers. This reflects inadequacies both in the type of employment generated and the type of education being imparted to youth. Many youths are still not willing to join the occupation of service economy. On the other hand, the rising expectations of the workforce drive the increasing numbers to leave traditional livelihoods in search of better employment prospects.

There is an absence of reliable information of the types and numbers of jobs in employment in specific occupational categories such as carpentry, masonry, electrical, mechanics. Many of these occupational categories are left unsatisfied owing to less of demand for various types of skills.

In the effort to find an effective strategy for employment generation, Government has taken numerous policy measures to provide a fill up to the missing links and to accelerate the natural process of employment generation.

While the percentage of the workforce employed in agriculture has been waning, total sectorial agriculture based employment continues to increase, although at a gentler rates than in the past (National commission Report on Farmers). Rising expectations from the level of farm productivity, changing attitudes of Indian youths towards agriculture, mechanization of agricultural sector have contributed to keep the level of the population employed proportionately same throughout the years (Imaizumi, Saori. 2011). However, the potential for employment in agricultural sector is not fully exploited and much scopes are left to cater to large numbers of people in agriculture.

According to ILO report, the informal agriculture economy is subsisting higher rate of employment, however, jobs are poorly paid and unprotected. Inadequate credit facility, poor returns to investment, absence of agricultural insurance and ready market, and lack of basic farming knowledge dissuade youth not to prefer agriculture as the choice for livelihood. Continuous poor harvest, poor storage facilities, insufficient land and initial capital have influenced to have a negative impression about agricultural pursuits as a means of livelihood among youth. It is essential to make improved and easier access to resources such as land, technology, capital and information to the youth along with training.

Further, the ILO definition of labour force and its contribution to the economy do not account for people who are not engaged full time in paid work. In fact, women, children and old people who perform majority of household activities are excluded from the ILO defined labour force. Support and involvement of women in household and their contribution to national economic development has usually been misrepresented driven by the societal discriminatory tendency based on the division of labour by sex. In the male –female division of household task, female participation in the household economy through the performance of domestic task, related to food preparation, concern of health and wellbeing the household members and maintaining a clean and healthy environment for survival of the household are not quantified in monetary terms.

Promotional and Protective Initiatives of the Government for employment

In a poor country, job protection can be an important form of social security provision. Since the early 1970s, wage employment programs have been an important agenda of public policy in the country. The Eleventh Plan emphasized on training and skill development as the major requirement of policy constituents in order to improve employability of the jobless multitudes in India.

Government of India has taken various ‘protective’ or passive and ‘promotional’ or active measures such as schemes on assistance and insurance to unemployment, provision of pensions, health-related benefits and a host of social transfers, legally mandated protection of working conditions.

According to Calmfors (1994), the active labour market policies comprise an array of measures with the purpose of making the matching process between vacancies and job seekers. Active measures are aimed at to upgrade and adapt the skills of job applicants in order to facilitate direct job creation. ALMPs includes the strategies to promote employment such as public service job, aids and support of private sectors for employment generation, targeted subsidies for job creation, training to participate in the labour market and so on (Marcello, 2003).

Active labour market policy (ALMP) mostly includes those plans and policies which enhance workers’ ability to guard themselves against loss of income due to ill health, disability and other subsidiary factors such as poor education and, low skills etc. pursue to create community assets/infrastructure and jobs for the unemployed, underemployed and reduce workers’ exposure to job-related risks (Marcello, 2003). ALMPs are in practice in

almost every countries have integrated people in labour market by improving their employability and guaranteeing a minimum level of income.

Typical 'passive' labour market policies, (LMPs) comprise unemployment benefits, old age benefits, labour laws and regulations have improved the rights of workers' capacity to protect themselves against loss of income and to address critical issues relating to efficiency, productivity, employability etc.

Apart from these, various legislations have been brought by Government of India at different periods of time with a call for requisite amendments such as Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 and Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970 and so on. There are social security schemes for the workers of organized sectors such as Rajiv Gandhi Shramik Kalyan Yojana, ESI³ (Employee's State Insurance) and EPF (Employee provident fund) facilities etc. These legislations have enacted to ensure statutory compensation in the event of closure or dismissal, lay off or cost-cutting, facilities related to retraining and redeployment, provision of stipend to unemployed, access to social security measures of Government for the workers from organised and unorganised sectors. On the other hand, Social security schemes such as Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme, Swabalamban Pension Scheme, Aam Admi Bima Yojana, Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojna have been introduced to provide marginal benefits to the workers of the unorganized sectors.

Although the scope of surplus employment in formal sector is limited, the job quality records to be worthy. Self-employment and small business continue to play a vital role in the tertiary sector. In order to cope up with the changing market conditions and circumstances, flexibility in the venue of workplace and of the duration of work is utmost important. This realization and expectations of both the employers and household workers place in concomitance with required training to participate in an efficient and fair labour market.

Employment prospects in the Government's social security schemes

The numbers of unemployed notches high as increased to 8.1 percent in the year 2010 in the rural India from 7.2 percent in 2000 (NSS, 2012).

Higher unemployment and low income in the rural areas has resulted to the low purchasing power of the villagers, further, lead to lower quality of life of the villagers. The increased purchasing power would act as an impetus not only to create new demand and employment opportunities, but also to build household assets.

Government has introduced various employment promotion schemes for the rural workers who are at the bottom of the pyramid in order to achieve the parameters of inclusive growth. Since 1974, during the period of the Fifth five-year plan (1974 – 1979), the government of India has implemented specific poverty removal plans with emphasize on growth to be driven by social justice and equity (Planning Commission, 2012).

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), one of the recent initiative under the wage employment programme initially implemented in 200 districts, during the financial year 2006-2007, and later extended to 615 districts during the financial year 2007- 2008. MGNREGA focuses on planning productive absorption of under employment and surplus labor force in rural areas where decline of one day employment has become a concern. This scheme provides legal guarantee of 100 days of direct supplementary wage employment generation in one financial year to every interested rural BPL families of which at least one adult member volunteers to do manual, unskilled work.

Various other Government schemes such as NREP (1980) ^[4], RLEG (1983) ^[5], JRY (1989)^[6] Employment Assurance Scheme 1993 ^[7], JGS, (1999) ^[8], NFWP,2004^[9] have been adopted time and again in order to eradicate rural unemployment and to create community assets. On the other hand, schemes like Swarna Jayanti Shahri Rozgar Yojana ^[10] has been introduced to provide gainful employment to urban poor.

Parallel to employment generation, these mission mode employment generation schemes have the potential to lessen many societal problems like family discord, substance abuse etc. by creating employment for one person in the family. Personal problems such as unaffordability driven food and education deficit for own kids, and other crimes in the family and households can be expected to have the lessening effects of the proper utilization of the scheme.

The Eleventh Five Year Plan had chosen the creation of a comprehensive National Skill Development Mission, a "Coordinated Action on Skill Development" with a vision to create 500 million skilled people by 2022 in order to secure the benefits of "demographic dividend". 12th plan of Government of India has also emphasized on the skill building of the labour force as an instrument to improve contribution of labour to the overall production. Free of cost subsidized mobile devices and mobile value added services (MVAS) can ensure reach of vocational and skill based training. Mobile education can be a viable alternative to employment to pursue the goal of National Skill Development Mission.

A comparative survey across India vis-à-vis China and OCED countries on the gradual fluctuations in demographic profiles indicates a unique "demographic dividend" that accounts for youngest work force in between the age bracket of 20 to 25 years in India. This signifies a relatively lesser population are dependent and those are youth who claim to have fairly larger share in the productive labour force.

Government has put focus on skill building in order to exploit "demographic dividend" in India and to

expand the opportunities related to production for the youth in India and abroad. Enhanced skill empower the labour force and improve the social acceptance of the labour force. In line of this development, Government of India have established Rural self-employment training institutes (RSETI's) in most districts of the state in order to impart training to rural BPL youth in collaboration with the leading district banks (Mahendra S. & Venkatanarayana, M. 2011).

However, the statistics of illiterate people in India shows a startling figure of 45 percent. In addition to this, only 60 percent of children from the age bracket of 11 to 14 years are enrolled in school, two-thirds of children usually drop out before completing 10th Standard, and only 5 percent of the workforce in the age bracket of 20 to 24 have undertaken formal vocational training which is an utter minimal figure if compared to 28 percent in Mexico and 96 percent in Korea (Deloitte Report, 2013).

Methodology

The aim of the study is to investigate obstacles to youth employment and youth's perception towards different occupations in addition to find out the employment prospects through networking by mobile phone technology. A 'structured questionnaire', was designed as an instrument for data collection to elicit information on demographic and psychographic aspects of both employed and unemployed youth respondents. The questionnaire includes information on job satisfaction, quality of job, salary or income, owning of communication and information technology, user's information conscious or information literacy, digital literacy, level of education, use of mobile phone, variety of uses of mobile phone and job related uses, user's awareness about various job related schemes and consciousness and about potential job avenues in the community. Informal interviews with the agricultural scientist on the degree and potential avenues of youth's involvement in agriculture economy. The questionnaire is distributed among 40 households of 14 selected villages from 14 development blocks of Sonitpur District, two wards of Guwahati Metro.

The secondary data were collected mostly from government departments, books, journals, newspapers etc. The identified variables based on literature review are as follows: (1) Educational level: (Illiterate, Literate-up to Primary, Middle complete, High school and above); (2) Place of Residence (Urban, Rural); and (3) Sex and occupation (Male, Female); (4) Landowning Status (Yes, No)

Objectives

1. To evaluate the challenges to youth employment
2. To assess the employment prospects and job protection in different social security schemes and labour protection measures of the Government of India.
3. To assess the scope of replicability of several existed innovative model to be emulated to create job for the poor and marginalized groups such as women and youth.
4. To assess the relationship between possession of Information and Communication Technology especially mobile phone and the user's labour market participation and its subsequent income generation.

Discussion

Survey findings suggest the proposition of income in household and the income earned from primary and secondary occupation. It is found that 40 percent of total households surveyed are engaged in formal occupation and 60 percent of them are found to engage in informal sector activities.

Survey findings on the ratio of income earned from primary and secondary occupation bring out that 40 percent of total households are found in 20:80 and 20 percent of total households fall in 40: 60 while 60 percent is from 50:50. Household income per month is the indicator of economic prosperity of the household. The survey findings bring out that total income of some households rest in Rs.15000-20000 from the primary sector. However, income from the secondary sources add another Rs.6000 in the household and the contributor of this amount is mostly the women and young folk in the household.

A total of 10 percent of the surveyed rural youth relate agriculture to households' livelihood, as if they were born and bred to embrace farming. Another 20 percent of rural youth consider agriculture to be the first employment for them while 45 percent of rural youth prefer agriculture at the formative and dependent stages of their existence. Due to poverty, many youth could not mobilize resources for engagement in other livelihood activities and are compelled to engage in prevalent farming practices.

Nonfarm activities have been part and parcel of the household economy in rural areas and women and youth are found to engage as predominant participants and contributors in informal economy. The majority of the population in the country are already engaged in informal unorganized sector of economy. The survey findings reveals that a large numbers of youth are engaged in contract based economic activities such as weaving of baskets, sewing, selling farm products.

60 percent of total youth in the surveyed villages are using the mobile phone to communicate with

customers, contractors or brokers, manufacturers or producers at ease. They said mobile phone aids to settle their own business ventures. 25 percent of total youth surveyed who are farmers are found to use the mobile phone to obtain information about crop or livestock production, which indicates a connection with production decisions. 49 percent of youth perceive transportation and operational efficiency to be the primary beneficial impact of the mobile phone. 64 percent of men use mobile phone to increase their ability to reach new contacts and opportunities.

The financial status of household is represented in the monthly expenditure on various basic needs and communication services shows a significant and interesting difference between the rural and the urban or semi-urban regions. The rural household users have only one third of the purchasing power compared to the two other groups. However, both rural and urban households spend almost the same amount of money on mobile phone. The survey findings bring out that Internet café users in the urban regions of Sonitpur District and Guwahati District as compared to Rural Sonitpur District is higher in numbers. On a query related to the means and instrument of accessing internet in rural Sonitpur District in Assam, it is found that many rural youth between the age brackets of 15 to 35 access internet through mobile phone. Internet café is used when the villagers have to download any official document and for official transaction through email.

Looking closer to the combination of the users' profession and the number of alternatives for internet access, survey findings suggest that proportionately large numbers of government sector or private sector employed youth in the rural households have alternative internet access either at home or at their work place who are not interested of owning a mobile phone with convergent features. Whereas many unemployed, self-employed youth or youth engaged in informal economy have owned and used mobile phone with multimedia functions or convergent applications and substantiated the benefits of mobile phone to search and find job.

15 percent of the total surveyed youth are employed in agriculture without any formal training. The reason they state is mostly because of compulsion of not getting entry into formal job market and because of hereditary occupations. 70 percent of total surveyed youth have education up to secondary level. And 70 percent of total youth employed in agriculture have full digital literacy in relation to use of computer, internet and converged function of mobile phone.

Regarding the interest of youth's engagement with farming, many rural youth are of the opinion that institutional support services for agriculture and youths-extension education, credit provision, can motivate them to take agriculture as a source of livelihood. Youth opine that mobile phone can facilitate networking among youth, thus provide incentives to encourage collaboration and group activity among them.

50 percent of total youth surveyed have not heard about job portal, while 20 percent of surveyed youth have heard as well as accessed to job portals either 'Naukri' or 'Monster'. Almost all of the surveyed youth are interested to find available job avenues. The concern to contribute to family income and to settle individual life are the reasons that stimulate them to do a job. However, around 60 percent of total youth cannot relate the ability to access to job market with the education obtained.

Another 80 percent of wage earner who are belong to Below Poverty Line (BPL) households are found to own and use mobile phone. Their use of mobile phone is essentially utility specific and they mostly use voice function of the mobile phone corresponding to listen to music.

On questions related to the requirement of 'information push' services, many of the rural youth are looking for receiving 'job alert' on mobile phone either through SMS or through Voice calls. A free of cost voice based job registration facility and information service is what the rural youth prefer most.

Mobile phone are found to provide transitory detached benefits to urban literate youth. However, utility benefits of owning and using a mobile phone for the rural youth has subordinated the diverse uses of mobile phone by urban youth. However, mobile phone has given rural youth a chance to entrepreneurship and become a part of the information economy.

Review of Mobile phone based model for employment creation

The survey substantiated that the mobile phone has been contributed to create indirect employment. Mobile ecosystem comprises of infrastructure and support services, device manufacturer, network operators, distributors and retailers, content and services has contributed to create job. There are merely 10.5 million jobs directly supported by the mobile ecosystem across the world. The network operators register the largest share of 3.8 million jobs, while distributors and retailers provide another 2.6 million jobs. Handset manufacturers create 0.9 million jobs, while infrastructure & support services cater to around 1.5 million jobs and around 1.8 million jobs are supported by content and service providers (GSMA Intelligence, 2013).

Rapid, dynamic and continuous technological development has resulted various innovative applications and tools for mobile phone and Internet. Internet and mobile telephony has reached a stage in India where numbers of internet based services can be translated over a mobile based ecosystem to cater to masses. Various businesses have already leverage this whitespace and tried with many innovations. With the innovation in numerous services and applications, the mobile phone device created a space for people to experience social

innovation.

Mobile phones based employment generation model have been successful in countries such as Mexico and Africa as a useful tool to connect employers with job seekers. These mobile phone model represent the communication link among job portals, job seekers and employers where jobseekers can search for employment in databases of around 40,000- 45,000 employers. Assured Labour, a Mexico based online job portal has registered to have 2,000 employers and 150,000 jobseekers (Ungerleider, Neal. 2011). In Haiti, Konbit has been partnered with mobile phone service provider and local radio disk jockey in order to advertise its service through mobile phone and make users aware of the services.

The experience of Bolivia, once the lowest mobile phone penetrated region has expanded the mobile cellular network in rural areas and extended the basic services with the appropriate utilization of investment of International Finance Corporation (IFC), a member of the World Bank group. The unique local mobile phone based employment related narratives of Digicel in Pacific island region ¹¹, Ruralfone in Brazil ¹², Telefonica Cellular of Bolivia ¹³ can serve to be models that could be emulated in India.

However, services that are offered by the companies in India such as Assured Labour¹⁴, Babajob ¹⁵ and Soukstel ¹⁶ are not free of cost and use SMS user fees as a revenue stream. Although these companies have created job matching networks by providing the job seekers the access to employers' database, employees who get recruited through these portal actually needs the promise of sustainability and profitability of the job.

Nevertheless, a few cost effective network are functioning in India which can provide easy access to job opportunities. These mobile phone network have served the informal labour market by linking employers and job-seekers specially targeting the poor and disempowered of a region. For instance, Mahindra group's two leading voice based employment players in India , Saral Rozgar and Babajob, developed a mobility based job network platform for employment seekers for a cost of Rs.30 per month with a provision to send jobs alerts over phone by SMS.

Recommendations in relation to job mobility in service economy

The economic fabric of local economy has been changed and is found flooded with new services such as Internet cafes, Xerox, courier, credit cards, neighborhood newspapers, the new products of the information economy such as cell phones, motor vehicles, various insurance products and so on. Under such circumstances, employment generation is more about stimulating the natural growth of these elements which have the potentialities to create jobs. Technological innovation in local economy is represented by burgeoning of convergent embedded applications for internet and mobile phones as well as the organizational innovation in the form of STD booths, technology parks, export processing zones, private computer training centers, Internet café, self-help groups, micro-finance and so on. The boon of software, Business Processing Organization, journalism, sales & marketing started requiring person with higher skills. On the other hand, mushrooming of numerous job sites and E-couples claim to provide better access to timely relevant information to the needy people.

There is a gradual change noticed in the attitudes of rural and urban people regarding consumption, investment, entrepreneurship. Money flows, transport, communication, decision-making have experienced an increased speed not only in urban areas but also in rural areas. Legislations and enforced laws have emphasized more in safety and environmental regulations in the postindustrial post material information society. People are more environment/health consciousness than ever before and started speaking more about bottled water, recycling, organic foods etc. Speed, transparency, less red-tape are emphasized more in all government administrative process accompanying the germination of good governance with the reinforcement of the duty of public services of the administrative process as well as the state.

These developments of information society suggest that rural India has the opportunity to leapfrog over the traditional path to development, moving directly from agriculture into services.

Mobile phone technology with its multiplier effects enable to ensure higher productivity and thus generate employment and support to rise income of the users. Mobile phone has proved to raise demand for farm and non-farm products and services of the rural farmers in Sonitpur District, thereby, surge the opportunity for the farmers to sell the product and services and to earn some extra money. There are numerous instances in rural and urban Sonitpur District where people seek employment over a voice based mobile network, get health consultation service over a phone call; have learnt a language from a phone tutor and open a bank account with no credit history or address proof. Voice messages are particularly useful for the poor illiterate job seekers who have difficulties in reading and writing. However, job seekers are found to use all three primary functions of mobile phone such as voice, SMS, to collect relevant information on job notifications.

Interactive and easy interfaces of mobile online job portal reduces the cost and time of searching for jobs and thus, provides the real-time information to those more specifically to youth and unorganized workers who are hitherto excluded from such information pool.

The large unorganized workforce in India comprises the blue collared workers such as drivers, carpenters, painters, maids, waiters, and office boys etc. constitute the 'have not' section of digital divide. They

cannot afford to own a computer and have lack of skill to operate a computer and to surf internet. In many case, because of time constraints and distance, this section of people cannot reach the internet café or kiosk nearby vicinity of their residence.

People who are at the bottom of the poverty pyramid can have easy access to low feature handset. This will expect to bridge the information gap to certain degree if not steering to the broad digital literacy gap. Moreover, a toll free number with an interactive voice response system (IVR) can serve the poor to enroll on an employment forum. However, challenges in a multi-lingual country like India pose to devising out an artificially intelligent innovative voice recognition system which can interpret all the 780 languages¹⁷ including multiple dialects within each language. Hence, what users from different language, education, ethnic and economic background require is a combination of human and computerized voice based instruction mechanism in line with simplified key press system in place.

Ensuring an appropriate incentive for the companies for opening mobile phone based job portal and to encourage useful partnerships can prove to be effective for matching demand and supply in employment generation. Creating a conducive regulatory environment for partnership under the framework of public policy and to assess the impact of existing or already launched services that are offered has to be seriously taken into consideration by the Government.

The situation related to frictional unemployment when people look for first job can be improved by creating more awareness regarding new job openings. Government needs to take effective steps to encourage seasonal industries such as tourism and farming and to reassure people by providing opportunity to involve in off season jobs. The transition from industrial to information economy has created structural unemployment. This long term unemployment is accompanied by changing perception and behavior of consumer, human replaced by machine etc. Avenues such as retraining, on job training and by making people occupationally flexible are helpful to reduce structural unemployment.

Converged Mobile phone technologies can make agriculture and farming a credible career option for rural youth, an economically rewarding and intellectually stimulating one. Communication and information technologies will be helpful to gain access to existing and new markets, eradicate poverty and to ensure socio-economic integration of youth.

However, appropriate policy support is required to create and develop a value chain at block levels. Access to credit should also be facilitated to promote youth participation in agricultural and allied activities such as raising and marketing of crops fertilizers, dairy, plantation, horticulture etc.

A centralized data base of agricultural information can make many untrained youth to become up to date with relevant agricultural information. Improved access to Training at the primary and secondary school level and an arrangement to include agriculture in the general curriculum of the school, making agribusiness a part of curriculum in the agricultural colleges or universities can motivate youth to engage in agriculture. On farm training, enterprise development training particularly in value added activities such as food processing and packaging will ensure sustenance of youth's involvement in agriculture and help many youth to choose agriculture as the preferred livelihood alternative.

Summary

Lack of equal access to information of the labour markets tend to be main obstacles not only for those who are seeking employment but also for interested employers to identify and recruit qualified individuals with requisite education, skills, and experience. Although there are employment opportunities present both in formal and informal sectors, but, employment prospects are availed to those who have a strong social network, personal reference and skills to access employment related information.

Globalization and technological changes have given birth to various dynamic initiatives and several innovative models to create job including among more vulnerable groups in developing countries and thus, increase their welfare and livelihood opportunities. These initiatives have the capacity and scope to adequately reach the most vulnerable and disempowered section of the society. However, there are challenges around the complexities of monitoring and evaluating the impact of the initiatives, both in terms of quality assurance of employees and job satisfaction.

There is no co-relation between education and employment. However, much of the employment creation in recent years has been seen in the construction industry which does not require high level of education. However, that co-relation reflects in women education and increasing jobholding. Job situations are better in industrial economy than in agricultural economy. Youth are the most vulnerable in society who confront the challenge of quality employment. Various active labour protection measures are only applicable to those who are into the formal sector. Informal economy is approaching which is too be encouraged. Any social policy has to be integrated with internet and mobile technology. Government needs to create a database and to promote vernacular language over English and user friendly mobile phone interface in order to introduce the people living in the bottom of the pyramid to the market.

*Two words, 'Mobile Phone' and 'Cell Phone' are used interchangeably in the paper.

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End Notes

[1] The National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) during the period July 2011 - June 2012 carried out 68th round of all-India household on employment and unemployment in India. The nation-wide survey investigate the estimates of various characteristics pertaining to employment and unemployment and labour participation in workforce at the national and State levels.

The unemployment rate among illiterate youth fall in the age bracket of 15-29 years is estimated to be 3.7 percent which is recorded lowest at all India level in 2012-2013, in comparison to 1.2 per cent of unemployment during 2011-2012. The unemployment amongst the graduate youth has increased to 32 per cent during 2012-2013 from 19.4 per cent in 2011-2012. The state of West Bengal recorded to have highest numbers of unemployed households with (54%) followed by Jammu & Kashmir (48%) Jharkhand (42%), Kerala (42%), Odisha (39%), Assam (38%), Bihar (35%). The states with high degree of industrialization and of urbanization have recorded to have lowest unemployed households such as Maharashtra (14%), Gujarat (12%), Andhra Pradesh (18%) Karnataka (14%) and Tamil Nadu (18%). India needs to create over one million jobs annually for its unemployed youths. <http://mail.mospi.gov.in/index.php/catalog/143>

[2] Monster and Naukri are two of the biggest online job portals in India to maintain a database of available jobs.

[3] ESI Scheme, a multi- pronged service intensive Social Security programme for workers is designed to provide medical care where state government is the designated agency to deliver and administer.

[4] National Rural Employment Programme (NREP, 1980) was introduced to provide employment to unemployed and underemployed workers to build community assets.

[5] In 1983, Rural Landless Employment Guarantee (RLEG) was launched to provide 100 days of guaranteed employment to one member from each rural landless household.

[6] Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY, 1989) is another programme aims to alleviate poverty through creating supplementary employment opportunities for rural poor during agriculture recess period.

[7] Employment Assurance Scheme EAS is introduced in 1993 to create additional wage employment opportunities through manual work for the rural poor living below the poverty line during lean agricultural season.

[8] In 1999, Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY) was launched to create demand-driven community village infrastructure including durable assets at village level and skills to enable the rural poor to increase opportunities for sustained employment.

[9] National Food for Work Programme (NFWP) was introduced in 2004 with exclusive focus on the 150 identified backward districts with the aim to generate additional supplementary wage employment and to create assets.

[10] Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana, an employment specific scheme that has been implemented in all

states except Chandigarh and Delhi since 1999. It promotes income generating activities through Self Help Group (SHG) for below poverty line households in the rural areas.

[11] Ruralfone Inc: Received 2008 IFC corporate award: Telecommunication of Brazil has been characterized by limited infrastructure, poor service and coverage, low income. It was Ruralfone Inc. which developed an innovative business model to provide high quality services to the segment of the population who are not adequately served by incumbent operators. Ruralfone launched its pilot in May 2005 in Ceará, one of the country's poorest states. Gradually, the company has expanded telephone penetration and service to ten cities which are extremely underserved. 75% of new subscribers of Ruralphone Inc did not previously have access to a phone. By using GSM technology and reducing cost through the leasing of capacity, Ruralfone offers its customers cost reductions of as much as 40% over traditional fixed line services. The company in its area of operation even assist local governments to deliver the "hot lines" service, a social service that immediately report violence against children and women.

Ruralfone builds local capacity by training local population, creates job opportunities for them and offer hirings. Women constitute over 60% of Ruralfone's staff. For many of them Ruralfone is their first major job, and some have become the main bread winners in their households.

[12] Digicel PNG Limited: Digicel provides voice call service at a decreased rate in rural areas. It has produced so far over 200 regular jobs and creates indirect employment for about 4,000 Papua New Guineans. Digicel PNG is a successful example of sound business model on information and communication technologies for other governments throughout the Pacific island region.

[13] Telefonica Celular de Bolivia S.A.: Telecel with the support of lower cost GSM network, provides low cost access to health and education services and mobile banking in rural areas. The savings of low cost GSM network result lower prices for consumer. The Telecel has expanded and upgraded its network and spurred the growth of job distributors in small and medium businesses. The company mainly serves Bolivian citizens as 97% are Bolivian of total 450 Telecel employees. Telecel offers an example that a transparent and profitable investment is possible in countries which are facing political instability.

[14] Assured Job Check is a cloud based job management platform. It includes both online phone and support, provides job access anywhere. However, it is not free of cost as requires to pay Rs.6000 per month for 5 users.

[15] Babajob is a Bangalore based job search portal for entry level and informal sectors. It catalogues provides job and hire by city and category and ready to provide instant help when needed by providing a scope to give a missed call for jobs. However, the job search and match service is not free of cost.

[16] SoukTel is a mobile phone JobMatch platform that provides real-time job information. SoukTel provides instant updates to job-seekers and employers about available job, connect job-seekers to entrepreneurs and counsellors.

[17] '780 languages spoken in India, 250 died out in last 50 years, (Jul 17, 2013) IANS, Kolkata. Retrieved from <http://www.hindustantimes.com/books/780-languages-spoken-in-india-250-died-out-in-last-50-years/article1-1093758.aspx>

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