

The Changing World of Work in Developing and Emerging Economies
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Abstract

The world of work is changing at a magnitude that we have yet to fully grasp, let alone respond to. Over the past several decades, the workplace has been transformed by globalization, changing power dynamics, and new and emerging technologies—including artificial intelligence, robotics, and big data. These changes are playing an increasingly important role in shaping the jobs of the future, by shifting jobs between sectors, transforming the kinds of tasks that are done in existing jobs, and changing how people connect to work. However, these changes are not impacting people equally, with some workers bearing the brunt of these challenges disproportionately, thereby exacerbating overall inequality. Not only are the implications different across individuals but also across countries. The way the future of work is going to pan out across countries depends on their history, culture, demography, politics and social and economic development. The existing discourse on the future of work largely seems to focus on the advanced world. Out of the 3.4 billion global labour force that we have in the world today just about 20% is accounted for in the developed world. A large part of it is in developing and emerging economies where informality and precariousness is the norm and not impact the exception. Large masses of the workforce here are trapped in low productivity jobs, low paying jobs with very very low initial conditions. The magnitude of the challenge of future of work in these economies is of completely different order. This essay attempts to widen the ambit of the discussion on the future of work by examining the issue from the lens of developing and emerging economies.