

SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE EXTENT AND CAUSES OF CHILD LABOUR

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Abstract: The issue of child work has remained a contentious theme of research due to the large socio-economic costs associated with it. Despite significant efforts to eliminate child labour, it is deep-rooted in many parts of the world. About 9.6 per cent of children are engaged in some form of work or another the world over. India is home to about 10.1 million child workers. The paper reviews their status across the states and the industries, where the incidence of working children is high. An attempt is also made to review the underlying causes of this phenomenon, including the association of child work and underage marriage. The findings indicate that a diverse array of social and economic factors exacerbates child labour. In addition to poverty alleviation, a wholistic combination of interventions like school retention and compulsory primary and middle education for children, productive employment avenues, and education for parents is likely to lead to a more realistic policy response.

INDIA'S TRADE DEFICIT PROBLEM IN THE RCEP: A PANEL DATA APPROACH

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Abstract: ASEAN centric model, known as Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, is considered to be a bigger and better free trade agreement. The central idea of developing RCEP, in 2012, was to increase efficiency and reduce trade barriers among ASEAN, and its 6 FTA members. Had India joined RCEP, it could have faced various trade-related challenges, especially the increasing trade deficit with other RCEP members. Of the 15, India is facing a trade deficit with ten members, whereas China is the major contributor. The main focus of this paper is to find the critical determinants for India's trade deficit with the RCEP region. The empirical result of this study shows that India has failed to reduce its trade deficit with other RCEP members. India's tariff policy to curb imports has not been fruitful, while its trade balance in RCEP mainly gets affected by the external factors.

Keywords: RCEP, Balance of Trade, Panel Data, Generalised least square, Trade Integration

STATE GOVERNMENT FINANCES AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA IN THE POST-REFORM ERA

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Abstract The State Governments have an important role ascribed to them by the Constitution for ensuring growth and development. Since the states shoulder a disproportionately higher share of expenditure as opposed to the revenues that accrue to them and are hence dependent on the Centre for transfers and other forms of borrowing to undertake their mandated responsibilities. However, in the post-reform era, the States are faced with growing debt-burden, reduced avenues of generating revenues, restrictions on borrowings and declining transfers from the Centre. Even the fiscal stringency norms have restricted the fiscal space of the states and affected growth and development in rural areas. This paper examines State Government finances and the impact of the neo-liberal reforms on rural development expenditure to conclude that rural development has suffered due to the deteriorating financial condition of the State Governments and due to the fiscal stringency norms that have circumscribed the fiscal space and the capacity of the State Governments to strengthen the rural economy.

Key Words: Center-State Relations, Rural Development, State finances, Public expenditure, New Economic policy.

WORKING CONDITIONS OF INFORMAL WORKERS: AN ANALYSIS OF THE EXTENT OF INFORMALITY AT WORKPLACE

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Abstract A majority of the workforce is working as informal workers across the world. With a varying degree of informality, they are vulnerable to exploitation due to lack of legal and regulatory protections. Growing liberalisation and competition, along with limited work opportunities in the formal sector brings a large and growing proportion of workers in the informal labour market. This paper explores how working conditions for informal workers can be explained by framing an informality index. The position of workers on the informality scale highlights that the majority of informal workers have to face poor work conditions at their workplace. Using multinomial regression, significant worker-specific characteristics have been traced to increase their bargaining power for formal/less informal working conditions. An attempt is also made to explore some workplace specific characteristics wherein the extent of informality is higher. The study suggests some corrective measures, which not only work in-line to improve working conditions but also help in raising tax revenue of the government to finance minimum social security and improve working conditions of the informal workers.

Keywords: Informal labour market, informality index, informal workers, working conditions, worker-specific characteristics, workplace specific characteristics.

IMPACT OF SOCIAL SECTOR DEVELOPMENT ON INCLUSIVENESS OF GROWTH: A CASE STUDY OF PUNJAB

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Abstract The present study examines the impact of Social Sector Development on inclusive growth in Punjab. The results indicate that the households receiving the scholarship for their wards; households availing the maternal healthcare benefits provided by the government, households that got children vaccinated from the government healthcare centres, households who constructed their toilets, and the households served by sewage treatment were found to have a positive and significant impact on inclusivity of growth. On the contrary, the inclusiveness of growth exhibited a negative association among the households receiving benefits under any housing scheme, and the households covered under different welfare schemes for marginalised sections. The paper concludes that it calls for a more proactive strategy on the part of the government to promote employment, strongly monitor and evaluate policy outcomes, and elicit people's participation in decision making in a democratic framework, to attain sustainable inclusive growth.

Keywords: Social Sector Development, Inclusive Growth, Employment Generation, Iterated Factor Analysis, Tobit Regression.

ECONOMIC WISDOM IN INDIA AND THE WEST DURING THE ANCIENT ERA AND THEREAFTER

Arnab Majumdar

Abstract The issue of the standard of scientific intellect that developed in ancient India has been a subject of intellectual debate, since long. There are diverse views regarding the fundamentality of scientific thoughts in ancient India, and their relevance in modern times. Such debates have regained their vigour in recent years. Though economics and finance are the crucial areas of human life, it is strange that there is not much of an interest among the intelligentsia about ascertaining the state of economic wisdom in ancient India, and analysing its quality and relevance in today's world. Besides, there is a general perception among the occidental thinkers that intellectual exercises in ancient India were about abstract, otherworldly matters, and had nothing to do with practical aspects of life. It is in this background that the study tries to reinforce the fact that though there may be a lack of awareness and understanding both among Indians, as also in the west, about the development of economic wisdom in ancient India. Several hardcore practical aspects

of life like money and finance were an integral part of intellectual exercises in ancient India. The paper argues that the level of economic wisdom in ancient India, and thereafter, reached far greater heights than the contemporary western intellect in the same sphere.

Keywords: Ancient Indian economic wisdom, Kautilya Arthashastra, Rig-Veda, Vedas, Puranas, Nitishastra.

SWADESHI MOVEMENT AND PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN BENGAL

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Abstract: In the history of India's freedom struggle, the *Swadeshi* movement played a vital role. It not only enlightened the people but also played a substantial role in developing the spirit of nationalism and patriotism. The *Swadeshi* movement in Bengal is a familiar theme in Indian historiography. Historical scholarship has been focussed on different aspects of this multi-dimensional movement. As is well known, the *Swadeshi* movement emerged in response to Curzon's decision to partition Bengal, which was officially declared in 1903. Bengali women responded to the call and came out in large numbers to participate in the movement against the British government. The character of their response can best be analysed in three sections; direct participation, indirect participation and participation through writings. The main purpose of this paper is to focus attention on the nature and extent of the participation of the women of Bengal in the *Swadeshi* movement and on the interaction between this movement and the women's movement in Bengal.

Keywords: *Swadeshi*, Movement, Women, Bengal, Participation

STYLE OF QUESTION MATTERS: AN EXPERIMENT WITH QUESTIONS ON GENDER VIOLENCE

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Abstract: Reliable data in surveys is a pre-requisite to correct estimates. There are various kinds of 'response errors' in surveys which lead to biased or inconsistent estimates of the population parameters. Some of the response errors are not intentional but when it comes to opinion survey, it might often lead to asymmetric distribution of errors. This paper experimented with positive and negative styles of questions in the forms of statements on gender violence, which were canvassed among randomly drawn adult individuals. The analysis of the data using a statistical model revealed that, instead of a single set of questionnaires, one should make two sets - one positive and one negative and canvass the two sets to two independent samples in the population. The model can then be used to estimate the exact proportion of persons who accept the statement.

Key Words: Response error in survey, Style of question, Gender violence, Chi-square test, Statistical model

DETERMINANTS OF GREEN PRACTICE BY MANUFACTURING SMEs IN URBAN AREAS OF SRI LANKA

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Abstract: This study examines factors that determine green practice adoption by small and medium scale manufacturing enterprises (SMEs) located in urban areas of Sri Lanka. The determinants include technological factors, organizational factors, business environments, and environmental attitudes and awareness. A questionnaire survey on the green practice adoption of manufacturing SMEs located in the Western Province of Sri Lanka was conducted and data from 342 sample firms was analyzed. The logit regression results reveal that external factors such as regulatory pressure, governmental support, relative advantage, compatibility of green practices and internal factors such as organizational support, quality of human resources, awareness, attitudes and costs and

benefits have significant and positive influences on green practice adoption by urban manufacturing SMEs. Meanwhile, complexity has a negative influence on adoption of green practices. However, firm size and customer pressures do not have significant influence.

Key words: Green practices, SMEs, Sri Lanka, Manufacturing sector, SDGs, Logit model

ASSESSING THE OUTPUT AND PRODUCTIVITY GROWTH OF INDIAN MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES DURING THE POST REFORM PERIOD: EVIDENCE FROM STOCHASTIC FRONTIER APPROACH

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Abstract: Applying the stochastic frontier production function approach, this paper estimates and decomposes the output growth as well as total factor productivity (TFP) of aggregate manufacturing industries across states in India during 1993-2011. The result indicates that change in inputs and TFP play more important roles for output growth while the contribution of capital input is negative. It is remarkable to note that most of the states have achieved negative change in input growth in the years 1998, 2000, and 2001, respectively. However, of all the factors responsible for the output growth, change in input growth contributes the most, followed by technological progress and technical efficiency, respectively. Though technical efficiency is a component of TFP growth, it contributes little to TFP growth and thus the improvement of technical efficiency is the key element for improving the efficiency of Indian manufacturing sector. Technical progress being larger than technical efficiency to the TFP growth in most of the states for the Indian manufacturing sector. The estimated technical efficiency scores across the states have increased over the years, implying that the states gradually move closer to the production frontier over time.

Keywords: Indian manufacturing, Total factor productivity, Technical efficiency, Technological progress, Stochastic frontier

ENABLING PEOPLE AND PROCESSES FOR RURAL TRANSFORMATION: A KNOWLEDGE ENABLED INSTITUTIONAL ECONOMICS PERSPECTIVE IN GUJARAT

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Abstract: This paper discusses markets in the farm to food process sector. In addition, access to credit, technical knowledge and education backed by access to institutions play a role in improving farm income and create a Vent for Agricultural Surplus. These enabling processes are then described in detail based on author's field visits in Gujarat.

Key Words: Rural transformation, Wholesale *mandi* (market), Farm efficiencies, Institutions, Vent for surplus.

MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY AND DEPRIVATION IN RURAL AREA: INSIGHTS FROM TWO VILLAGES OF GURUGRAM DISTRICT IN INDIA

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Abstract: Despite the relatively high growth of the overall world economy in the recent decades, the incidence of poverty and deprivation in various pockets of the globe is still considered a critical matter that needs to be addressed; otherwise balanced international development will remain a far-reaching goal. Poverty is one of the root causes of underdevelopment of a region. It is imperative to look at this problem through a macro as well as a micro glance. Our focus in this study is on micro issues. The main objective of this paper is to measure multidimensional poverty and deprivation in two villages – Alipur and Kasan - of Gurugram district of Haryana state in India. The study collected data from 235 households and the selection of these sample households was done based on the stratified random sampling method, covering the population groups such as 'general category', 'scheduled caste' and 'other backward class'. The study used an updated version of the Rangarajan committee poverty line for measuring income poverty and the Alkire and Foster (2009) methodology for multidimensional poverty analysis. The results show that multidimensional poverty is higher than income poverty; and education and health deprivations are the most significant reasons for multidimensional poverty.

Key words: Income poverty, Deprivation and multidimensional poverty, Rural Haryana, India