

DIGITISATION AND INCLUSIVITY: TAKING EVERYONE ALONG

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17

Education and employability in the digital age



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"Human resources—not capital, nor income, nor material resources—constitute the ultimate basis for wealth of nations. Capital and natural resources are passive factors of production; human beings are the active agents who accumulate capital, exploit natural resources, build social, economic and political organisations, and carry forward national development." (Harbison 1973)

The quality and productivity of tomorrow's work environment hinges on the education, skills, creative capacity, and employability of today's youth, especially on how well they are integrated into the rapidly evolving digital and artificial intelligence era representing the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Their ability to transition to and participate in a dynamically evolving market for skills is a growing global challenge because of its centrality to sustainable development and building of progressive societies.

In this regard, while some western countries flaunt their low joblessness rates, what remains unspoken and unseen are the multitudes in precarious, part-time, low-paid and self-employed work. McKinsey, a global consulting firm, believes that "some 30 to 45 percent of the working-age population around the world is underutilised—that is, unemployed, inactive, or underemployed. This translates into some 850 million people in the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, Brazil, China, and India alone." In Bangladesh, too, while the unemployment rate is shown to be around 4 percent, according to a government study reported in a local daily, "the country has 1.38 crore underemployed people. Of them, 45.3 percent are in the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18





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