

## The Indian Society of Labour Economics

The Indian Society of Labour Economics (ISLE) is a professional association of researchers, scholars and other stakeholders interested in the area of labour, employment and development issues. The Society promotes scientific studies of labour markets, employment, employment relations and related issues and disseminates knowledge. It publishes a quarterly, peer-reviewed journal The Indian Journal of Labour Economics (IJLE), which is now in its 69<sup>th</sup> year of publication. Promoting and featuring scientific studies on labour and employment issues, the journal is co-published with Springer. More information on the journal is available on <http://www.springer.com/economics/journal/41027>



### THE INDIAN SOCIETY OF LABOUR ECONOMICS

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# 6<sup>th</sup> THE INDIAN SOCIETY OF LABOUR ECONOMICS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

19-21 January 2026 | Symbiosis School of Economics, Symbiosis International (Deemed) University, Pune, India

## PRE-CONFERENCE PANEL

### New Technologies and Employment: Comparative Perspectives from Emerging Economies of The Global South

Organised by



18 January 2026 | Pune



# About the Panel

## New Technologies and Employment: Comparative Perspectives from Emerging Economies of The Global South

### Background

This Roundtable will explore comparative country experiences across a selection of developing countries on how technology has, is, and will likely shape employment trajectories.

Some themes for discussions include:

- What has technology changed most about employment in your country—and who has benefited or lost as a result?
- Is technological change in your context creating better jobs, or mainly more precarious ones?
- Which workers or sectors are being left behind, and why aren't current skills systems responding fast enough?
- What single policy or institutional factor has most shaped how technology affects employment in your country?
- Looking ahead, will new technologies deepen existing inequalities or enable structural transformation—and what must be done now to influence that outcome?

These are of course suggestive issues and the Panelists are free to address other relevant themes which they consider appropriate



# Programme

**SUNDAY, 18 JANUARY 2026**

- Chair : **Deepak Nayyar**  
Emeritus Professor, Jawaharlal Nehru University;  
Former Vice Chancellor, Delhi University; and  
Chairman, Institute for Human Development (IHD),  
New Delhi
- Panelists : **Uma Rani**  
Senior Economist, Research Department,  
International Labour Organisation, Geneva  
*Topic: The Impact of Technological Change on  
Labour Markets in Developing Countries*
- : **Alexandre Barbosa**  
Professor University of São Paulo (USP). Institute of  
Brazilian Studies (IEB), Sao Paulo  
**Alvaro Comin**  
Professor of the Department of Sociology at  
University of São Paulo (USP)  
*Topic: Economic Development, Labour Market and  
Inequality in Brazil: Old and New Challenges*
- : **Imraan Valodia**  
Pro Vice-Chancellor and Director, Southern Centre  
for Inequality Studies (SCIS), University of the  
Witwatersrand (WITS), South Africa  
*Topic: Technology and Labour Market Trends in a  
High Unemployment Context: Perspectives  
from South Africa*



- : **Ravi Srivastava**  
Director, Centre for Employment Studies,  
IHD, New Delhi
- : **Balwant Singh Mehta**  
Professor, Institute for Human Development (IHD),  
New Delhi  
*Topic: Young Workers, Technology and Employment:  
Perspectives from India*
- : **Maria Monica Wihardja**  
Visiting Fellow and Co-coordinator, Media,  
Technology and Society Programme at ISEAS – Yusof  
Ishak Institute and Adjunct Assistant Professor,  
National University of Singapore  
*Topic: The Heterogeneous Impacts of Digital  
Transformation and Investment on Indonesia’s  
Labour Market*
- Discussants : **Ravi S. Kanbur**  
T.H. Lee Professor of World Affairs, International  
Professor of Applied Economics and Management  
and Professor of Economics, Cornell University
- : **Kunal Sen**  
Director, United Nations University - World Institute  
for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER),  
Helsinki, Finland



# Biographies of the Resource Persons

## Deepak Nayyar



Deepak Nayyar is Emeritus Professor of Economics at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, and an Honorary Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford. Earlier, he taught at the University of Oxford, the University of Sussex, and the Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta. He served as Vice Chancellor of the University of Delhi from 2000 to 2005. He was Distinguished University Professor of Economics at the New School for Social Research, New York, from 2008 to 2012.

Professor Nayyar is Chairman of the Sameeksha Trust, which publishes Economic and Political Weekly. He is, at present, Chairman of the Board for the Institute of Human Development, New Delhi. He was Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi, from 2014 to 2025. He was also President of the Indian Society for Labour Economics from 2014 to 2025. He has also served as a Director on the Board of several firms in the corporate sector in India: Press Trust of India, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation, Steel Authority of India, ICRA (Indian Credit Rating Agency), Maruti Udyog, Export-Import Bank of India, State Bank of India, and State Trading Corporation of India. He was educated at St. Stephen's College and the Delhi School of Economics. Thereafter, as a Rhodes Scholar, he went on to study at Balliol College, University of Oxford, where he obtained a B. Phil and a D. Phil in Economics. He has received the VKRV Rao award for his contribution to research in Economics, and the Malcolm Adiseshiah award for his lifetime contribution to Development Studies.



## Uma Rani



Uma Rani was Senior Economist at the Research Department, International Labour Office (ILO) in 2008. She holds a Ph.D in Development Economics from University of Hyderabad, India. Her main research interest lies in the digital economy, global supply chains, informal sector, minimum wages, social policies and gender. Since 2016 she has been working on digital transformations in the world of work, wherein she tries to explore how labour and social institutions could be strengthened to address economic and social inequality. She works in the area of digital labour platforms, algorithmic management in regular workplaces and AI supply chains. She coordinated the flagship report of the ILO on “World Employment and Social Outlook 2021: The role of digital labour platforms in transforming the world of work” and is currently co-editing a volume on “From Taylorism to algorithmic management: A multi-sector analysis of technology, control and worker experiences”

## Alexandre de Freitas Barbosa



Alexandre de Freitas Barbosa is an economist and historian with a PhD in Economics from the University of Campinas (UNICAMP). Since 2009, he has been a Professor of Economic History, Brazilian Economy and International Economics at the Institute of Brazilian Studies of the University of São Paulo (IEB/USP). He is the coordinator of the “Rethinking Development” research hub at LabIEB and a CNPq Research Fellow. He recently co-authored, with Alexandre Macchione Saes, the book *Celso Furtado: trajetória, pensamento e método* (Autêntica, 2025). He also published the book *Growth and inequality: the contrasting trajectories of India and Brazil* (Cambridge University Press, 2017), co-authored with Gerry Rodgers and Maria Cristina Cacciamali. His primary research interests focus on Brazilian economic and social thought, labor and inequality in Brazil, and the economic and geopolitical relations between Latin America and China.

## Imraan Valodia

Imraan Valodia is Professor of Economics; Pro Vice-Chancellor: Climate, Sustainability and Inequality; and Director of the Southern Centre for Inequality





Studies, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg (WITS). His research interests include: inequality, climate justice, competition policy and industrial development and employment in developing countries.

Professor Valodia played a leading role in establishing and leading Wits University's Southern Centre for Inequality Studies (SCIS). The SCIS is a multi-disciplinary, cross-country initiative to promote research and policy change to advance greater equality. Professor Valodia serves on a number of national committees in South Africa, including the Competition Tribunal; the Presidential Economic Advisory Council; and the National Minimum Wage Commission; and is a member of the Academy of Science of South Africa (Assaf) Standing Committee on Science for the Reduction of Poverty and Inequality. Internationally, Professor Valodia serves on the following boards: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD); UNAIDS Global Council on Inequality, AIDS and Pandemics; Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO); and the Global Development Institute.

### **Maria Monica Wihardja**



Maria Monica Wihardja is a Visiting Fellow and Co-coordinator of the Media, Technology and Society Programme at ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute and an Adjunct Assistant Professor at the National University of Singapore. She was a former World Bank Economist in the World Bank's Poverty and Equity Global Practice and the recipient of the Nikkei Asian Scholar 2023. She is a member of the East Asia Forum's Editorial Board and the Center for Indonesian Policy Studies' Board of Directors. In 2017, she was seconded to the Executive Office of the President of the Republic of Indonesia as a senior advisor to the Deputy Chief Staff in charge of strategic economic issues, where she oversaw the food policy reforms and stunting prevention agenda. From 2012 to 2014, she represented Indonesia at the Think20 meetings at the Los Cabos, Saint Petersburg and Brisbane G20 Summits. Her main research topics are digital economy, labour market, food security and agricultural reforms, regional and global architecture, and disinformation and electoral propaganda. She has a PhD in Regional Science from Cornell University, a MPhil in Economics from Cambridge University, and a BA in Applied Mathematics-Economics from Brown University. She likes art and music, and is a children's book author.



## Ravi Kanbur



Ravi Kanbur researches and teaches in development economics, public economics and economic theory. He is the T.H. Lee Professor of World Affairs and International Professor of Applied Economics and Management, as well as Professor of Economics, at Cornell University. He is well known for his role in policy analysis and engagement in international development. He has served on the senior staff of the World Bank including as Chief Economist for Africa. He has also published in the leading economics journals, including *Journal of Political Economy*, *American Economic Review*, *Review of Economic Studies*, *Journal of Economic Theory* and *Economic Journal*.

The positions he has held include: Chair of the Board of United Nations University-World Institute for Development Economics Research, Co-Chair of the Food System Economics Commission, Co-Chair of the Scientific Council of the International Panel on Social Progress, member of the OECD High Level Expert Group on the Measurement of Economic Performance, President of the Human Development and Capability Association, President of the Society for the Study of Economic Inequality, member of the High Level Advisory Council of the Climate Justice Dialogue, and member of the Core Group of the Commission on Global Poverty.

## Kunal Sen



Kunal Sen is Director of UNU-WIDER while on leave from the Global Development Institute, University of Manchester, where he is a professor of development economics. Professor Sen is a leading international expert on the political economy of growth and development. He has performed extensive research on international finance, the political economy, determinants of inclusive growth, the dynamics of poverty, social exclusion, female labour force participation, and the informal sector in developing economies. His research has focused on India, East Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa. He has been awarded the Sanjaya Lall Prize in 2006 and Dudley Seers Prize in 2003 for his publications.



### Ravi Srivastava



Ravi Srivastava is currently a Professor and Director, Centre for Employment Studies, Institute for Human Development, Delhi. He was earlier Professor of Economics and Chairperson, Centre for the Study of Regional Development, Jawaharlal Nehru University, and full-time Member (2006-09) of the National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector (NCEUS), in the rank of Secretary, Government of India. He received his education in the University of Allahabad, the Delhi School of Economics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, and University of Cambridge, UK. He is a recipient of numerous awards and scholarships including the Commonwealth and the Fulbright Fellowship; the University Grant Commission's award in economics (2001) for innovative research on poverty, and the V. V. Giri Memorial Award (2009) for research on labour migration. He is former Chairman of the Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur. He has been member and chairperson of a number of committees of the University Grants Commission, MHRD, Planning Commission, and Member of the ICSSR Governing Council for two terms and member of Governing Boards, Academic Council, Executive Council, and Board of Studies of a number of universities and institutes.

### Balwant Singh Mehta



Balwant Singh Mehta has worked extensively in the areas of Information and Communication technology for development, labour, employment and child well-being. He has contributed several papers on these themes to various reputed national & international journals and books. His contributions to social research is acknowledged by several international organizations through fellowships and other awards such as the International Amy Mahan Fellowship in ICT4D (2010-11), by University of Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona; South Asian ICT4D Research Fellowship (2009-10) from Singapore Internet Research Centre, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore; and the International Development Research Centre India Social Science Young Research Award (IDRC-SSRA) in 2009.

