

## 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

C/o Institute for Human Development  
256, 2nd Floor, Okhla Industrial Estate, Phase-III, New Delhi-110020, India  
**Phone:** 011-41064679; **Mobile:** +91-9871177540  
**Email:** [mail@isleijle.org](mailto:mail@isleijle.org); **Website:** [www.isleijle.org](http://www.isleijle.org)

Daffodil Graphics #8368564419, 9313726383



॥वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्॥

# 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

Panel on

## Interrogating Growth: Labour, Employment and Development Outcomes in the Contemporary World

Organised by



ISLE Research & Development Trust

20 January 2026 | Pune



# About the Roundtable

## Interrogating Growth: Labour, Employment and Development Outcomes in the Contemporary World

### Background

Is it wise, even if it was possible, to judge the “goodness” of economic growth by its speed? How are the elements of its “goodness” or “badness” to be identified and assessed? Is it intrinsically desirable to want a larger slice of a toxic pie? While economic growth is surely necessary, there is an imperative to consistently monitor, and respond to, its sources, character and concomitants, in particular when these represent sharp trade-offs between a high/er rate of raw economic growth versus its often-undesirable outcomes in social and human domains that form key constituent elements of desirable, holistic, and sustainable societal development. The eminent specialist speakers in this Round Table will reflect on these and related relevant issues at multiple levels on the basis of their expertise and experience in diverse micro, country and/or global contexts. The broad intention to is to find reasons and ways to escape from the money-metric trap of equating a higher rate of economic growth definitionally with superior and sustainable developmental and social outcomes. In view of recent experience globally, not just in the global south, it is imperative to seek ways and means to square this circle. It all depends .... Hopefully, the panellists’ reflections will tell us, on what.



# Programme

**TUESDAY, 20 JANUARY 2026**

- Moderator : **Ashwani Saith**  
Dean Emeritus, School of Liberal Studies, BML Munjal University; Emeritus Professor, International Institute of Social Studies (of Erasmus University) The Hague; Honorary Professor, Institute for Human Development; and formerly, Professor and Head of the Development Studies Institute of the London School of Economics.
- Panelists : **Kaushik Basu**  
Professor of Economics, Cornell University, USA, and former Senior Vice President and Chief Economist, World Bank, Washington DC and Former Chief Economic Advisor, Government of India
- : **Finn Tarp**  
Professor, Department of Economics, Development Economics Research Group, University of Copenhagen
- : **Farzana Afridi**  
Professor of Economics, Indian Statistical Institute (Delhi) and Research Fellow, IZA (Bonn)
- : **Alexandre Barbosa**  
Professor, University of São Paulo (USP). Institute of Brazilian Studies (IEB)



- : **Martha Chen**  
Co-Founder, International Coordinator Emeritus and Board Member, WIEGO and Associate, Mittal South Asia Institute, Harvard University
  
- : **Neeraj Kaushal**  
Professor, Social Policy, Columbia University;  
Research associate, National Bureau of Economic Research, USA



# Biographies of the Resource Persons

## Ashwani Saith



Ashwani Saith is Dean Emeritus, School of Liberal Studies, BML Munjal University, Emeritus Professor at the International Institute of Social Studies (of Erasmus University) The Hague, and Honorary Professor, Institute for Human Development. He read Economics at St. Stephen's College, Delhi, and Trinity College, Cambridge, UK, where he obtained his Ph.D. He has been in research and teaching positions at the Delhi School of Economics; Faculty of Economics, Cambridge; Queen Elizabeth House, Oxford; and the London School of Economics, as the first Chair of Development Studies and Head of its Development Studies Institute. He has held various visiting professorships and editorial positions on leading journals and has researched and published extensively on a wide range of development themes. His recent research has been on Cambridge economics in the post-Keynesian era focussing on the purge of heterodox traditions and the rise to dominance of mainstream, neoclassical economics underpinning neoliberal ideology.

## Kaushik Basu



Kaushik Basu is Professor of Economics and Carl Marks Professor of International Studies at Cornell University. From 2012 to 2016, he was Chief Economist of the World Bank and from 2009 to 2012 he served as Chief Economic Adviser to the Government of India. He was president of the International Economic Association from 2017 to 2021. He



is currently the N. R. Kamath Visiting Chair Professor at IIT Bombay. Educated at St. Stephen's College, Delhi, and the London School of Economics, Kaushik Basu has published widely in development economics, game theory and moral philosophy. His books include *Analytical Development Economics*, Blackwell Publishers, *The Republic of Beliefs: A New Approach to Law and Economics*, Princeton University Press, and *Policymaker's Journal: From New Delhi to Washington, D.C.*, Simon and Schuster. In 2021, he was awarded the Humboldt Research prize.

### Finn Tarp



Finn Tarp, a development economist, is a University of Copenhagen (UCPH) Professor and Coordinator of the UCPH Development Economics Research Group (DERG). Formerly the Director of UNU-WIDER (2009–18) he is a leading international academic and policy expert on issues of development strategy and foreign aid, with extensive research in poverty, inequality, agricultural sector policy and planning, household and enterprise development, and climate change, sustainability and natural resources. His publications include more than 140 articles in internationally refereed academic journals, including top journals such as *The Economic Journal*, *Journal of Development Economics*, *World Bank Economic Review*, *European Economic Review*, *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, *World Development*, *Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics*, *Land Economics*, *Food Policy*, *Review of Income and Wealth*, *Journal of Economic Geography*, *Feminist Economics*, *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, *Journal of Development Studies*, and *Climatic Change* as well as regional journals including for example *Journal of African Economies*, *South African Journal of Economics*, *Journal of Asian Economics* and *China Economic Review* – alongside six books, thirty edited book volumes/special journal issues, seventy-three book chapters with leading international academic publishers plus a very large number of research reports and other studies and publications. He has extensive research and policy advisory background in countries such as Mozambique, Vietnam, South Africa, Tanzania, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Myanmar. His h-index is 73.



### Farzana Afridi



Farzana Afridi is a Professor of Economics at the Indian Statistical Institute (Delhi) and a Research Fellow at the IZA (Bonn). Her research lies at the intersection of development and labor economics, covering three broad themes: gender and social identity; human capital; and governance. She has collaborated with governments, non-profits and businesses to conduct several field-based projects, using both administrative data and randomized experiments. Afridi's work contributes towards designing more effective transfer programs, understanding the role of information in improving health and learning outcomes, and assessing the impact of identity and networks on performance, productivity and labor market outcomes.

Afridi has taught economics, in various capacities, at the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor), Syracuse University, Delhi School of Economics, ISI, Geneva Graduate Institute, National University of Singapore, and the University of Toronto. She is a recipient of the National Mahalanobis Memorial Medal, conferred by The Indian Econometrics Society for contributions to quantitative economics.

### 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.



### Martha (Marty) Chen



Martha (Marty) Chen is an Associate at the Mittal South Asia Institute at Harvard University, where she taught for 35 years, and Co-Founder, Emeritus International Coordinator and board member of the global network Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO). An experienced development practitioner and scholar, her areas of specialisation are employment, gender, and poverty, with a focus on the working poor in the informal economy.

Before joining Harvard in 1987, she had two decades of resident development experience working in Bangladesh (with the well-known NGO BRAC) and in India (as field representative of Oxfam America) with a focus, in both countries, on the economic empowerment of women from poor households. In 1987, Dr Chen co-founded WIEGO which she then led for 20 years, Under her leadership, WIEGO grew into a global network renowned for its work to improve the status of the working poor in the informal economy, through stronger organisations, improved statistics and research, and a more favourable policy environment.

Dr Chen received a PhD in South Asia Regional Studies from the University of Pennsylvania. She was awarded a high civilian award, the Padma Shri, by the Government of India in April 2011, and a Friends of Bangladesh Liberation War award by the Government of Bangladesh in December 2012.

Currently, Dr. Chen is the Chair of the Boards of BRAC Global and the United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU WIDER).

### Neeraj Kaushal



Neeraj Kaushal is Professor of Social Policy at Columbia University and Research Associate at the National Bureau of Economic Research. Kaushal is a labor and health economist and conducts research on immigration. Her academic research has been featured in The New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, The Economist, The Financial Times, the Washington Post, and The Times of India. In her award-winning book, *Blaming Immigrants: Nationalism and the Economics of Global*



Movement, Kaushal investigates the core causes of rising disaffection towards immigrants globally and tests common complaints against immigration. She writes a bi-weekly column in the Times of India, and monthly columns in the Economic Times and Dainik Bhaskar. Her co-directed documentary based on her research on tribal resettlement in India, Dammed, but not Damned, is available for viewing on Disney Hotstar. In her forthcoming book, When Africa Comes to America: How the Next Wave of Immigrants Will Transform the United States will be available in Spring 2026.

