

In this section we present views/opinions of some individuals whom we knew to have expertise and knowledge on different areas/elements of an employment-oriented development strategy. Views are, no doubt, personal and should not be taken to present official views of the organisations to which the contributors belong to. We asked these individuals, in their personal capacities, to identify major problem areas from within various elements of an employment oriented development strategy.

Here we present a selection of the replies which should be seen in the context of growing international concern to meet present employment problems. Mr. F. Foggon, Director, I. L. O. London, sums it up while commenting on the World Employment Conference.

"The forthcoming World Employment Conference poses many problems for the industrialised and the less developed countries. But the most difficult decisions and the most complex administrative questions are those which face the countries in the process of development. How to move away from the urban oriented development and the drive for industrialisation towards the development of the rural areas; how to convince and persuade those already in wage earning jobs that changes in their standard of living must not be allowed to increase the already wide gap in living standards between them and the people of the rural areas; and in an administrative term how to inject the yeast of development into the heavy dough of rural poverty".

GERRY HELLEINER
Professor of Economics
University of Toronto, Canada
And ILO Consultant
 on
MULTINATIONALS, TECHNOLOGY AND EMPLOYMENT

If absolute poverty has not been alleviated and if unemployment has continued to rise despite rates of growth of

national income which frequently have been, by historical standards, quite high, a large part of the problem must stem, it is argued, from the import of inappropriate technologies. Designed for use in much richer countries, these technologies are bound, when transferred to poor countries, to involve far too much scarce capital in productive activities which involve relatively few workers. As the principal "messengers" who have brought what is increasingly seen as "bad news" the multi-nationals have been blamed for the bulk of technology transfer sins.

They are not, however, the only ones to blame. Developed country governments through their aid agencies have also, often with the best of intentions, foisted inappropriate technologies, upon the Third World. And the governments of the developing countries themselves, by formulating policies which encouraged the use of such technologies by underpricing capital and foreign exchange, and providing overly generous tariff and other protection, must also share some of the responsibility.

But all of these facts are sufficiently well-known. If inappropriate production technologies and products continue to be introduced by multi-nationals or by others it can only reflect failures of capacity, will or power, on the part of developing countries' governments to introduce better incentive systems or to bargain more effectively with multi-national technology suppliers. The implication is that they must therefore either be technically strengthened or politically encouraged (or both) to improve their own performance.

Multinational enterprises, in response to new incentives- are now supplying some more appropriate technology. But the impact upon employment and income from these new activities in the majority of developing countries is unlikely to be great. There is clearly already a crying need for the development of joint Third World bargaining approaches to the multinational enterprises in the new sphere of manufacturing for export.

Ultimately, there can be no substitute for wide-ranging domestic policy changes by the governments of developing countries themselves if employment and poverty problems are to be overcome. Whether the multinational enterprises would then, or should then, play an important role in the sale of appropriate technologies and products can still only be matter for conjecture.

FRANK RAMPERSAD
Director
Trade and Finance Division
Commonwealth Secretariat
on
TRADE AND EMPLOYMENT

'Jobs' is one of the three key objectives in any development strategy adopted nationally or internationally to improve social and economic conditions in the poor countries: (the two others are 'food' and 'self reliance'). 'Jobs' must be a key goal not only because up to one third of the labour force in many developing countries is wholly unemployed or substantially under-employed, but also because jobs are an indispensable means of maintaining human dignity and the cohesiveness of the family unit, roles that transfer incomes cannot effectively play. (In the circumstances which most of the poor countries are placed, they cannot be appropriately described as "developing").

But 'jobs' means the production of saleable goods and services, and 'jobs' can be made or lost by the choice of an appropriate technology: herein lies the direct connection between 'jobs' and international trade. Almost all poor countries rely externally for technology; and most of them the provision of jobs for their labour force is impossible without access to export markets; this is true of commodity production as well as the production of services and manufactured goods.

While for some poor countries, especially small island economies, the provision of export services could be a prime mover - and the export of services encounters severe restrictions - the Commonwealth Expert Group was right in saying that "only significant and sustained industrialization in the developing countries can provide directly and indirectly the new jobs required". But sustained industrialization in the poor countries, which now supply barely 7% of world industrial output, is impossible without access to the markets of the industrialized countries. Export trade in manufactures and technology, of course, already provides directly and indirectly

a large proportion of the jobs in the industrialized countries; the industrialization of the poor countries will sustain this employment, although the composition of the jobs industrialized countries will undergo some change as they adapt to the situation.

All of this is obvious and, in the face of the universal support for and the countless resolutions in favour of the development of the poor nations, one is naturally perplexed as to why the situation on access to markets for goods and to technology still retains its imperviousness to structural change, the effect of marginal changes in some areas being counteracted by new obstacles in others.

Perhaps the reason lies in the fact that the debates have so far been directed to arriving at a general consensus on goals and have not yet moved to the specific modalities required to give effect to the consensus. Certainly the Lima Declaration on increasing the share of the poor countries in world industrial output to 25% by year 2000 is in this vein. The delay has, however, given rise to a point of view, which cannot be swept under the carpet, that there is no intention on the part of the industrialized countries to make any concessions to assist the poor countries, so that negotiations are not likely to be a productive use of effort. If, however, the former view is correct, then it becomes important that the working out of the specific modalities should not take as long as the arriving at the general consensus for the facts demonstrate that the poor countries are not improving their absolute and relative position at a rate considered acceptable; Commonwealth Heads of Government found the gap between rich and poor countries "too great to be tolerated". Effective and meaningful programmes of industrial cooperation among Commonwealth countries may well be a very effective means of converting consensus to action and showing the way forward to the rest of the world.

TARLOK SINGH

Formerly, member Indian Planning Commission
and Executive Director (Planning) UNICEF
United Nations, New York
on

EMPLOYMENT AND PLANNING

The primary means for achieving a design of

economic development which could ensure growth, stability and social justice and provide work for all, particularly in the case of the Indian economy, are:

- (i) A change in basic priorities in relation to productive utilization of available human resources and upgrading of their skills and productivity;
- (ii) an overwhelming priority for agriculture, and a redefinition of industrial objectives in terms of agriculture and the rural economy and production of essential goods and services for mass consumption. Several of the more serious problems of the Indian economy, both short-term and long-term, flow from the lags which have occurred in agriculture;
- (iii) reorganisation of the agrarian structure broadly along co-operative lines. On the one hand, marginal and uneconomic farm units have to be turned progressively into units which can be operated efficiently and will be capable of yielding surpluses. At the same time, through intensification of agriculture and diversification of the rural economy, conditions have to be created in which the available manpower can be used for more fully and productively than at present;
- (iv) The existing dichotomy between the organized and unorganized sectors of the economy has to be replaced by an increasingly integrated and unified national economy;
- (v) Provision of adequate educational facilities for the entire community, including adults; and
- (vi) Measures for equitable distribution of income and wealth and provision of essential social services.

With the recasting of development strategies along these lines, means will be found for getting closer to the hard, rural core of the problems of unemployment and under-employment. All other aspects of unemployment will thereby become more amenable to public action, and reforms in education and in social institutions will begin to gain much greater meaning and relevance in changing the life and attitudes of all sections of the population.

T. SCARLETT EPSTEIN
Sociologist, Fellow Institute of
Development Studies, England
on
EMPLOYMENT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Rural employment in less developed countries is a much more intangible phenomenon than its urban counterpart. A large proportion of third world rural dwellers still derives its livelihood from family subsistence farming. With an increasing rate of population growth set against strictly limited supplies of cultivable land this in itself poses serious problems. Moreover, agricultural labour requirements are seasonally peaked which often results in labour-displacing mechanisation; last but by no means least, important agricultural extension services have so far largely ignored the female labour force. These basic facts of rural life present a challenge not only in the design, but even more important in the implementation of development programmes.

PHILIP MBITHI
Professor of Sociology
University of Nairobi
on
YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Concern with the employment problem in Africa is based on the complete erosion of the belief that economic growth and welfare are positively related and therefore that the maximization of growth is also the maximization of welfare. Whatever constituted the basis of this belief, the realities

of growth in Africa indicate that even where we have had rapid growth rates (7 - 9% G.N.P. growth per annum), the objectives of enhancing higher levels of economic welfare - however measured - were not being realized. This lack of achievement applies whether the basis of measurement in terms of increased incomes for the vast majority, increased levels of living or increased amenities for all. At the same time and closely related to relatively decreased welfare, are the issue of decreased access to opportunity, and hence increased unemployment. Thus, despite the high growth rates in the fields of investment and industrial output, the growth of employment in urban and rural areas has far lagged behind growth in manpower and has become a critical problem.

In particular the problem of unemployment of youth has become recognized as perhaps the most critical of all other forms of unemployment. This is largely because this population includes school-leavers, who are the most active job-seekers, and the foundation of more efficient and trained manpower.

The data generated for most African countries indicates clearly that 70 - 80% of the unemployed, especially the jobless, are between the ages of 15 - 24 years old. This data exposes the problem of youth unemployment in dimensions which development planners have ignored. They have tended to see youth as potential (future) labour force, an army of dependants.

Because youth form 80% of the rural to urban migrants as well as the majority of the urban unemployed, a critical strategy of youth programmes will continue to be attempts to alleviate and perhaps eliminate rural to urban drift of school leavers. This implies that youth programme planners will need to study and hold dialogue with educators, young people themselves and rural development planners in order to identify the extent to which their programmes can be made complementary to one another, mutually reinforcing, and goal specific.

There is strong bias towards increasing access to jobs by the educated youth. Continued sponsoring of projects which recruit school leavers is further encouraged by many practical problems such as the difficulties involved in training illiterates, the preferences of employer, the speed of learning among educated young, the need for discipline, and the politi-

cal expediency of removing the more articulate educated youth from the streets.

The problem of illiterate youth can be seen as arising from rural and urban poverty, under-development of rural regions and certain groups in society. This problem should be thrown into the development arena in the same way as the problem of women, as a problem of a very significant population group whose solution must be the goal of more than one Ministry.