

WORK, LIVELIHOODS AND RIGHTS

Deepak Nayyar

Abstract

This paper attempts to analyze the implications of the changed national context, characterized by a growing enthusiasm for liberalization, and the changed international context, shaped by the gathering momentum of globalization, for work, livelihoods and rights, from a development perspective. It would seem that markets and globalization have transformed the world of work, which has consequently become more complex and diverse. There is an explicit shift in the focus from labour to work. And there is an implicit shift in emphasis from workers as a class to workers as individuals. The changes in the nature of work also mean that livelihoods no longer depend on employment alone, and thus are at risk in a world where income opportunities for most people are provided by insecure or casual employment. At the same time, the narrow legal perspective of rights at work is being replaced by a concern about rights of people in the wider context of development situated in the much broader arena of social ethics. This mismatch between emerging reality and emerging thinking is striking. It is possible to bridge the gap only through correctives and interventions in national development strategies. The realization of rights as a part of the development agenda would also reshape the world of work and of livelihoods.