

## Plenary Session

### *New Narratives of Job Creation*

A panel of five speakers, who represented various stakeholder positions in the micro-enterprise development ecosystem, spoke in the “Jobs We Want” plenary session. Each speaker made a short presentation on formalization of models of engagement for job creation, highlight, larger questions of economic policy and formalization of business practices. Livelihoods and their evolving form in light of digitization, technological advances, and globalization were prominent themes in the discussion.

**Mr. Pankaj Pachauri** highlighted the importance of a livelihood focus to avoid jobless growth in India. He further added the future is in innovation and digitization. He shared employment projections and trajectories covering various sectors like agriculture, construction, retail, transportation, textile and clothing, education and skills, handicrafts, beauty and wellness, furniture and furnishings and tourism. He highlighted that the economy is growing in the service sector, but providing employment to only 27% of the people. He emphasized that agriculture sector is the key providing 15% of country’s GDP and creating 52% of livelihoods. This sector needs major reforms in terms of smart farm, uberised agriculture technologies, smart loan and other value additions.



**Mr. Arvind Virmani** focused on the basic duality in the economy and the necessity of thinking about policy. He further added that informal economy should focus on self-employment and income generating activities, highlighting two strands – traditional agriculture and rural services. He underscored Mr. Pachauri’s point of shifting economies from urban to rural and manufacturing sector shifting to service based sector. He shared latest data about rural population wherein secondary education has gone up, technical education has gone down and vocation education has increased by marginal amount. He emphasized that basic education and job skills are the top priority for job creation in rural areas.

**Mr. Rajiv Sethi** highlighted the importance of the creative and cultural industry, which is currently untapped and undervalued in India. Through a presentation he outlined the work done by the Asian Heritage Foundation in 6 poorest yet “richest” states in India to provide support to artisans and craftsmen who are currently unemployed. He gave examples of how urbanization of smart cities raze these traditional workers to ground and mechanization displaces traditional hand made products. For this, he insisted the government to empower and financially support this sector. He further stressed the importance of collaborative action with neighbouring countries by building a platform for sharing expertise.



**Mr. Shyam Surat Yadav**, a weaver from Bhadohi, eastern Uttar Pradesh shared examples of how new policy reforms like GST affect rural microenterprises and livelihoods. He mentioned that access to start-up capital is difficult for rural potential entrepreneurs because of number of procedures and follow ups required. He shared two major challenges faced by micro entrepreneurs – suppression of credit lines and difficulties in procurement of raw material. He further added, if these two pain points will be addressed by the government, the Bhadohi carpet industry will be largely transformed.

**Mr. Raghav Chandra**, co-founder, UrbanClap, shared that inspite of huge employment potential; the service industry is highly disintegrated and unorganized in India. He shared the both demand and supply situation in the industry in both urban and peri-urban areas. He also highlighted the fundamental entry barriers faced by women and youth in terms of inability to access required technologies, markets, financial instruments and skills. He emphasized the role of technology integration, microfinance institutions and aggregators to create large number of jobs in India.

