

## Talk Show

The evening session of the launch of the “Jobs We Want” event was conducted as a conversation among Shri Jayant Sinha, Hon’ble Minister of State, Government of India, H.R.H. The Infanta Cristina of Spain, Director – International Area, “la Caixa” Banking Foundation and Dr. Ashok Khosla, Chairman, Development Alternatives Group.

The discussion, moderated by Mr. Nalin Mehta, Executive Editor at The Times of India Online, was focused on issues of job creation and micro enterprise development in rural India.



The conversation was initiated with a brief presentation by Dr. Ashok Khosla on creating economic opportunities through the development of decentralised production and consumption centres called TARA Hubs across rural India. In view of this, the panelists acknowledged the need to create decent work opportunities for youth and women and shared their perspectives on the current state of affairs at the outset. Talking about the Indian economy, Shri Sinha claimed that strong economic growth is taking place as evidenced by indicators like number of loans disbursed by MUDRA and EPFO subscribers. While recognising the need for a strong tracking mechanism, he explained that the Indian economy is shifting gears and fundamental structural reforms are being put in, which may have slowed down the economy currently but will spur the system up for accelerated growth in the future. Dr. Khosla emphasised that the immediate need is to identify sectors which have the potential for employment generation given the current resource constraints and capacity. He highlighted the need for designing systems which focus on making environment the subject of creating employment such that natural ecosystem is rejuvenated along with providing sustainable green jobs.

Talking on the crucial role of micro enterprises in driving job creation and enabling a positive environment for these to thrive, Princess Cristina put forth her perspective that multi stakeholder partnerships, networks and collaborative action are imperative for the transition. On addressing the question for GST compliance related complexities for micro entrepreneurs across rural India, Shri Jayant Sinha complimented the GST framework for excluding a majority of micro enterprises from its ambit for easier implementation and acceptance. He, however, admitted that the reform would require few more months to settle. Dr. Khosla, however, pointed out that while steps are GST are progressive for the formalisation of the economy, he pointed that the R&D sector is underfunded by the government which is a prerequisite for sparking innovation to enhance possibilities for entrepreneurship and meeting basic needs.

As the conversation moved forward, the panellists shared their thoughts on the role of various stakeholders in the ecosystem for creating entrepreneurship and job creation. Dr. Khosla shared his view that the government has the right intention but is not adopting frameworks for systemic change. He indicated that the civil society needs to be brought within the sphere of governance so that ground realities at the last mile reach can influence policy making at the centre. Recognizing that private organizations are autonomous, flexible and enterprising, Princess Cristina highlighted the role private sector in providing resources in the form of expertise, capacity and funds for philanthropic outreach. Shri Sinha emphasised that the role of the government is to facilitate tools and provide support to individuals and enterprises rather than that of creating jobs. He asked the house to focus less on the government and more on what entrepreneurs can do emphasising that change can be brought by the people themselves.

The talk show concluded with panelists launching a monograph “Jobs We Create” which put together narratives and perspectives of micro entrepreneurs from rural India.