

Weekly Livelihoods Update

09 October 2018

✚ **High Time to End Tuberculosis:** The global burden of tuberculosis is in decline. However, with an estimated 10 million new cases of tuberculosis and 1.6 million dying from the disease globally in 2017, we still have a long way to go. A centuries-old disease, tuberculosis, previously known as “consumption,” is still the deadliest infectious disease in the world, with patients and their families facing stigma and incurring devastating socio-economic costs. The United Nations’ first-ever high level meeting on tuberculosis, held on 26 September 2018, has committed to accelerating efforts and increasing funding towards achieving the agenda of the Sustainable Development Goals to end the tuberculosis epidemic by 2030. India, which accounts for 27% of the world’s tuberculosis burden, had set its own target at the End-TB Summit in Delhi earlier this year: TB Free India by 2025. Considering the state of India’s healthcare, this may be an unrealistic target. [For further reading: <https://www.epw.in/journal/2018/40/editorials/high-time-end-tuberculosis.html>]

✚ **Rethinking India’s Employment Data Architecture:** India’s employment data architecture is in the midst of a massive overhaul. Historically, employment estimates have been generated using household and establishment surveys. The importance of analyzing both these sources to get a comprehensive picture of India’s dualistic labour market, characterized by dominance of informal jobs, cannot be overemphasized. Household surveys capture both the organized and unorganised sectors, particularly the self-employed. In that sense, they largely satisfy the requirements of completeness. The quinquennial household surveys on employment and unemployment conducted by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), the last of which was conducted in 2011–12, have been the primary source of various labour market indicators since 1972–73. The Labour Bureau since 2009–10 has also started conducting annual household employment and unemployment surveys. Establishment surveys, on the other hand, compile data from worksites and provide a more detailed picture of the industry structure of employment and characteristics of establishments. [For further reading: <https://www.epw.in/journal/2018/40/commentary/rethinking-indias-employment-data.html>]

✚ **Manufacturing a drought:** It seems no lessons were learnt from the drought two years ago. Maharashtra's Marathwada region is facing yet another water crisis and it's again a result of woeful mismanagement of available water resources. The reservoirs at Jayakwadi, Manjra and Majalgaon – the three dams that supply water to the region – have almost no water. On September 30, Jayakwadi was at a fourth of its capacity, while the others had run dry. It's a scary situation given that nearly two million people depend on these dams. Across the region consisting of eight districts, all available water bodies together have just 31.2 per cent water stock. This time last year, it stood at a far more reassuring 82.2 per cent. [For further reading: <https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/states/story/20181015-manufacturing-a-drought-1355245-2018-10-06>]

✚ **Identifying the 'Poor' and ' Backward':** At a household level, the issue of identifying the poor has had two aspects in India, namely estimation of poverty based on the consumption expenditure surveys of the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) and the identification of the poor through the below poverty line (BPL) census. Estimation of poverty in India has been an issue of much debate and has focused on the issue of what should be the poverty line, defined in terms of a monthly per capita expenditure level. While the Lakdawala Committee methodology and poverty lines (Government of India [GoI] 1993) formed the basis of the official poverty estimates at an all-India level and across states for the year 2004–05, since then there has been no consensus on what are the official estimates of poverty in India (GoI 2016). Estimation of poverty is required for counting the number of the poor, and the state wise and regional estimates of poverty have also been used in the development planning and resource allocation mechanisms. However, what matters for a needy household is whether it is classified as BPL or above poverty line (APL) by the BPL census carried out by the government. Being classified as BPL makes the household eligible for a range of government social assistance programmes targeted at the poor, while being classified as APL implies that the household would only be eligible for those programmes, which are universal in design. [For further reading: <https://www.epw.in/journal/2018/40/commentary/identifying-'poor'-and-'backward'.html>]