

## Leading career development services into an uncertain future: Ensuring access, integration and innovation

Country paper: INDIA [Insert country name]

In advance of the symposium all attending countries are asked to produce a country paper setting out the key issues for their countries in relation to the key themes of the conference.

Please use this template to enter your information. You should aim to be concise. Use bullet points and links rather than providing a lot of local detail. **The paper should be no more than 10 pages in length.**

How to submit:

- Download the Country Paper Template, save this on your computer.
- Prepare the country paper based on consultation within the country team and preferably with relevant national authorities and information sources.
- Submit the Country Paper by sending it to [jmc@iccdpp.org](mailto:jmc@iccdpp.org) (John Mc Carthy, director ICCDPP)
- Deadline: **31<sup>st</sup> of January**

If you have questions concerning the country paper, please contact John Mc Carthy ([jmc@iccdpp.org](mailto:jmc@iccdpp.org))

### Background information

1. List all of the members of your country team with their organisation.

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2. What are the key aims your country has for participating in this symposium?

A comprehensive, multi-pronged, transformational project in the form of National Career Service was launched just three years ago in this country. We are in the process of revamping public employment services and have been making efforts to increase its coverage and quality. We are also

looking for innovative practices being implemented in various parts of the world. This symposium is likely to give insights relevant to our work.



### Theme #1 - Context and challenges for career development policy.

In your country...

3. Is the level of policy interest in career development:

- Growing?
- Shrinking?
- Staying about the same?

Comment

Over the last decade, a strong revival of interest in career guidance can be discerned across sectors-government, corporate and social. This has resulted in to initiation of a number of programmes and initiatives at central, provincial as well as local levels.

4. What are the key political, social, economic and technological issues that are likely to have an impact on people's lives and careers in your country?

Give up to five of the most important issues as you see them.

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|---|---|
| 1 | <p>One of the key issues impacting lives and livelihoods of the people in India is growing footprints of climate change particularly in agrarian sector which are getting exacerbated due to environmental degradation. Eroding natural resource dependent livelihood base in rural areas and growing precariousness of existing opportunities are pushing people away from villages resulting in to climate change induced migration. At the same time, the process of moving towards a green, low-carbon economy has necessitated adoption of a number of mitigation and adaptation strategies which are impacting labour market in an unprecedented and significant manner. In the process of ensuring a sustainable future, carbon-intensive jobs are going away, green jobs are being created, some forms of employment are getting substituted, and many existing jobs are being transformed and redefined as skill sets, work methods, and profiles are turning low carbon/green. Ensuring just transitions remains a key development agenda of the country.</p> |
|---|---|

2	<p>Technological advances have always impacted lives and careers of people. But recent developments in robotics, big data, machine learning, internet of things, digital automation and artificial intelligence which are said to set off fourth industrial revolution, have started to transform job creation, workplaces, employment trends, and the nature of work at an accelerated pace, in irrevocable ways. On the one hand, these developments are threatening low-skilled jobs, precipitating social risks such as mass unemployment and widening inequality, they also promise new opportunities. In coming years finding ways to prepare the workforce in way that help them adapt to and leverage these changes, is likely to be a key challenge. At the same time, bridging the alarming divide between digital haves and have-nots, would be a key pre-requisite in order to rein in exclusionary possibilities and reap the inclusionary dividends of technological advancements.</p>
3	<p>The economy is undergoing a structural shift from agrarian-rural to becoming an urban and non-agrarian one, creating a demand for paid work. On the other hand, the pattern of global production and competition, which is encouraging outsourcing and vertical and horizontal production networks, is simultaneously influencing these labour characteristics. The outcome of these interactions coupled with the rigid legal labour regime, demand greater flexibility. These processes have initiated the trend towards greater home-based work, informalisation, casualisation, contractualisation and sub-contractualisation. The process is being catalysed by the migration, both aspirational as well distress related, which has registered a manifold increase in recent years. Interventions are being envisaged to ensure decent jobs, universal social security and other support services to migrants, informal workers and all those in nonstandard employment.</p>
4	<p>Another key issue of concern in the Indian context is the crisis in the sphere of learning which has been manifesting itself across levels (primary, secondary, tertiary) and sectors (formal, vocational, technical) in terms of poor achievement levels, low rates of skill acquisition, low employability and lack of mastery in fundamental competencies. These deficits result into poor level of workforce preparedness which translates into poor career decision making and career management skills leading to suboptimal transition into the world of work. Learning crisis is bound to have a suboptimal outcome both for the individual and the society.</p>
5	<p>And finally, vulnerabilities of marginalised groups, (those who are excluded on the basis of their caste, class, gender, location, ethnicity, religion, ability status) appear to have aggravated in recent times due to combined effect of a number of factors such as exclusionary neoliberal economic policies, jobless growth, existing structural hierarchies, and unrestrained and reckless exploitation of natural resources. At the same time, due to pressure of international, national and sub-national state and non-state actors visibility of these groups has also increased in recent times exponentially. Interestingly, one set of state action in terms of policies, legislations, programme and initiatives seem to be proving detrimental for these groups, while another set of actions are proving instrumental in the process of their empowerment.</p>

5. What roles do career development programmes and services play in addressing these political, social, economic and technological challenges?

Various challenges faced by the country need coordinated and concerted efforts at multiple level, while career development programmes and services in India have just started taking roots. These services have started making small yet significant contributions in achieving developmental goals of

the country. It is also noteworthy that impact of career services being provided by few voluntary organisations have been reported but those being provided by the government agencies and for-profit organisations largely remain undocumented. However, there is anecdotal evidence that career services have been assisting in dealing with broader challenges being faced by the country. A few examples are given below:

- a. Career services have started paying special attention to groups hitherto marginalised on the basis of gender, ability status, religion, caste, ethnicity and location. As a consequence individuals from these communities are getting educational and employment services which are helping them come out of intergenerational poverty and achieve social mobility.
- b. A number of schemes for ensuring quality education, at elementary, secondary and tertiary levels; and Skill India initiative attempt to fill the skill gap and develop a skilled workforce for the labour market.
- c. Career service providers in its role as advocacy counsellors are helping people adopt strategies for climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- d. As green guidance practitioners, career service providers can make their clients aware of emerging green career and livelihood opportunities.



## Theme #2 - Aims for, and access to, career development

In your country...

6. What are the key policy aims for career development programmes and services?

When National Career Service was being envisaged as a mission mode project in 2014, it aimed at : easy accessibility of services for all the stakeholders, provision of assessment of capabilities and relevant vocational guidance services, provision of accurate and quality employment market information, and collection and dissemination of information on employment and training (Ministry of Labour and Employment, n.d.). In a more recent articulation the Directorate General of Employment and Training (DGET) (DGET,2016, May 27) lists following focus areas : enhancing career and employment opportunities; counselling and guidance for career development; Focussing on decent employment; enhancing quality of workforce; enhancing female labour force participation; encouraging entrepreneurial endeavours; focussing on inclusive growth initiatives; engaging with

rural workforce for higher productivity; re-employment opportunities for returning and retired workforce; and transition of workforce from informal to formal sectors.

7. What groups of people can access career development programmes and services and what groups are excluded?

Theoretically, anyone can access career development services online through the National Career Services portal and offline by visiting public employment services (employment exchanges or Model Career Centres). But practically, career services are more accessible to persons who: are living in urban centres particularly in metropolitan cities; are in formal educational institutions; belong to socially privileged communities; are tech-savvy and possess digital literacy; want to join formal labour markets; whose parents/guardians are educationally aware and economically independent.

The groups that are excluded are largely: girls, women, tribal, minorities, those who are neither in education, employment or training; persons with disability, informal workers, poor, dalits (persons from the lower rungs of the caste hierarchy); persons who are in vocational sector; persons in remote areas; digital have-nots; persons whose parents are uneducated or less informed and less resourceful. NEET

It is important to note we cannot divide people into two categorical groups of those who can access these services and those who cannot as there are significant within-group variations as well. For example, it is not that every member of a tribal community is deprived of this service or everyone who is in an educational institution can access these services. For example, as per the recent educational statistics released by the Government of India, out of 249089 secondary schools in only 11977 schools reported that they deliver educational and vocational counselling to students (MHRD, 2018). It is evident that the students who are studying in remaining 95% of the schools are excluded.

8. How are the opinions of citizens and service users heard and incorporated into policy and practice?

Government of India has launched a website [www.mygov.in](http://www.mygov.in). It is a citizen engagement platform to promote the active participation of citizens in their country's governance and development. It attempts to crowdsource governance ideas from citizens and encourages them to discuss, comment and contribute to various government projects, programmes and policies. Additionally, every department publicises its contact details on their respective websites in order to engage user of a service. However, mechanism of inclusion of those ideas and suggestions into policy and practice remains unknown.

9. Is there a framework for ethical practice in career development? How does this framework balance the interests of the individual with the demands of policy and signals from the labour market?

There is not any framework for ethical practice in career development. However, different training institutions do sensitise their trainees in ethical aspects of their profession but there is not any common framework agreed upon by majority of practitioners. Indian Association for Career and Livelihood Planning is currently in the process of a developing one. It would attempt to devise a framework which would be cognizant of policy imperatives, personhood of the individuals and labour market trends.



### Theme #3 – Integrating career development into wider society.

In your country...

10. Which ministries or jurisdictions are responsible for career development programmes and services? Clarify what programmes and services each ministry or jurisdiction has responsibility for.

In the Indian context, two ministries are largely responsible for delivering career development services: Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD) and Ministry of Labour and Employment (MLE). MHRD deals with persons studying in schools, colleges and universities and functions through a number of agencies which are implementing schemes for different target groups. Since education falls under concurrent list of the Indian constitution, plans and policies pertaining to career services are being formulated both at federal and provincial levels. For school sector, various boards and directorates function to implement guidelines of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (elementary level) and Rashtriya Madhyamika Shiksha Abhiyan (Secondary level). In the tertiary sector also, while University Grants Commission runs schemes and provides funds for setting up career counselling centres in schools and colleges, various universities, and province level directorates are also initiating and managing career support services.

MLE is mandated to facilitate job seekers' successful entry into the world of work through a network employment exchanges (some of these exchanges have been rechristened recently as National Career Service Centres) that are controlled by Directorate General of Employment and Training (DGET). As per the recent annual report of the ministry (MLE, 2018), as on January 2016, there were 997 Employment Exchanges (including 42 Special Employment Exchanges for Persons with Disabilities); 21 National Career Service Centres for Differently Abled, out of which one centre

Country paper exclusively for women with disabilities; 25 National Career Service Centres for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and a central employment exchange under Directorate of Employment at New Delhi. MLE launched the National Career Service (NCS) in 2015 which replaced the National Employment Service (NES). The primary vehicle of NCS is the availability of an ICT-based national platform for interface among different stakeholders. In the first phase, 100 model career centres (MCC) have been established including career centres for people with disability with a grant support of INR 5 million each from the central government funds. It was expected that after a year, states would run these MCCs and convert other employment exchanges in the state in line with the MCC. Four main functions have been associated with the Public Employment Services : job-broking, providing labour market information, administering labour market adjustment programmes (which include job search assistance programmes, training and education programmes, and direct job creation programmes), and administering unemployment benefits (Phan, Hansen, & Price, 2001). In the Indian context as well, employment exchanges are performing these functions (Kumar, 2015).

However, in 2015, skill development function of DGET, MLE got transferred to the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship which was constituted in 2014 to coordinate all skill development efforts across the country. It is aided in these initiatives by its functional arms – National Skill Development Agency (NSDA), National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), National Skill Development Fund (NSDF) and 38 Sector Skill Councils (SSCs) as well as nearly 1400 training partners registered with NSDC. However, a stronger interface between skill development and career guidance and counseling would have been more effective (Buela, Miranada & Aravind, 2017)

There are a number of other ministries that offer career and livelihood support services for various target groups according to their respective mandates. For example, Ministry of Minority Affairs runs schemes for persons from the religious minorities, Ministry of Tribal Affairs has programmes and initiatives for persons with tribal communities, Ministry of Women and Child Development runs a number of training programmes that aim to make women employable, Ministry of Rural Development empowers rural youth to secure gainful employment, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment focuses on empowerment of Scheduled Caste, Other Backward Castes and Persons with Disabilities. The services offered by these ministries include: financial assistance in terms of scholarships (for continuing studies) and grants (for starting business), and skill development initiatives for developing trade specific skills and employability skills.

As evident from the above mentioned discussion, if we define career development services as all those services that assist individuals in choosing a career , preparing for it, getting in to gainful employment and surviving and thriving in the world of work, then a number of ministries seem to be involved in the process. But if we define career development services as services that assist individuals to make educational, training and occupational choices, then MHRD and MLE are directly responsible for delivering these services.

11. What leadership, co-ordination and collaboration approaches exist within the career development system to ensure collaboration across different sectors and different types of clients. For example, how are career development systems within the education system connected to those within employment, health and youth work?



In 2013, it was reported that there were at least 20 ministries/departments running employment-related schemes for young people directly or indirectly. In most of the cases they were not even aware of each other's initiatives leading to wastage of resources on the one hand and overall ineffectiveness on the other (Kumar, 2013). Situation appears to be the same in current circumstances as well. There is not any specific and well defined inter-ministerial / inter-departmental coordination and collaboration mechanism in place in the careers ecosystem in the country. Coordination and collaboration among departments/ministries responsible for delivering career services could best be described as well meaning but occasional and piecemeal.

.However, a recent initiative at the provincial level is worth mentioning. In the month of November last year, the government of Himachal Pradesh issued guidelines for counselling youth of the state through district employment offices and colleges (Government of Himachal Pradesh, 2018, Nov.22). A team comprising 17 district-level officials drawn from different departments has been formed. It consists of representatives from departments of industries, horticulture, higher education, public relations, health and family welfare, technical education, animal husbandry, tourism along with people from industry associations, skill development corporation, banks and district administration. They are expected to conduct regular activities in schools and colleges informing students about emerging job opportunities and sensitising them about scope of self employment

12. What are the main challenges to leadership in the field and the main obstacles to effective collaboration?

Following are the main obstacles to effective collaboration:

- a. Lack of a coherent career policy or a comprehensive legislation that: makes coordination and collaboration mandatory, lays down well defined mechanism, and articulates key deliverables in measurable terms.
- b. Lack of the vision that career development is a holistic and a lifelong process encompassing everyone. This lacuna results in to a myopic view of one's role pertaining to delivery of career support services which makes collaboration and coordination difficult.
- c. Departments/ministries cannot see beyond their target groups and hence are not able to see even a need for coordination.
- d. The key mandate of facilitating career decisions are divided primarily between two ministries, namely MHRD and MLE, A number of other ministries are delivering allied career services. This scenario has resulted in to overlaps and omissions making coordination cumbersome.
- d. Generally, officials entrusted with administering career support services are expected to do many other things focusing more on politically expedient tasks and delivery of career services takes a back seat. Competing priorities result in to non-collaboration.
- e. Since officials at the top of bureaucracy keep getting transferred hence most of them cannot ensure a long term commitment to the cause hence coordination does not remain a priority.
- f. Fragmented nature of service delivery across sectors and geographies.



g. Professional association of practitioners is in the nascent stage and currently lack visibility and voice. As a consequence, they are not able to work as a pressure group yet.

13. What kind of cooperation (if any) is there between the career development services and stakeholders like employers, trade unions, the media, NGOs, professional organisations etc?

Following are some of the examples of cooperation between career development service providers with other stakeholders:

a. National Career Service links various institutions such as industry associations, businesses, skill training providers, examination bodies, and state governments.

b. Few Model Career Centres are being run in public-private partnership mode where corporate houses are collaborating with public employment services.

c. Career development services in colleges and universities have robust inter-institutional collaboration mechanism with various government departments, corporate houses, non-governmental organisations, skills training providers, industry associations.

d. Directorates of Employment rope in employers, industry associations, professional bodies, NGOs and educational institutions for organising job fairs and career guidance programmes in various locations.

e. Trade Unions are invited to participate in the Indian Labour Conferences and share their concerns in the tripartite meets.

f. Media houses also participate in spreading awareness about career services through weekly pullouts and specialised magazines. They help publicize public career events.

14. How is the professionalism of career development workers developed and maintained whilst working with other professionals?

Since professionalization of career services in India is weak (Arulmani, Kumar & Paul, 2017), there is not any common professional code of conduct specifically for career development workers because the practice of careers work remains varied and unregulated. However, practitioners working under DGET, such as employment officers and career counsellors, attend regular training programmes at National Institute for Career Service where they get inputs on professional conduct. On the other hand, the National Career Service (NCS) has empanelled a number of career counsellors and vocational guidance experts under various categories. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) they need to sign as a part of the empanelment process has few clauses regarding professional conduct they are expected to adhere to (DGET, 2016). It is evident that they come from varied disciplinary backgrounds such as counselling, psychology, social work, and management. As part of the training, they are given inputs on professional conduct in their respective professions. But in day-to-day practice, there is no system of monitoring and ensuring strict adherence to professional

behaviour. However, if there is an obvious breach of professional conduct, only then the issue comes on to the surface and then authorities deal with that particular issue.

15. Do other types of professionals (e.g. teachers and social workers) deliver career development? How is a professional service ensured?

Yes, in the Indian context, career services are largely being delivered by people who are not primarily trained as a careers practitioner because there is an increasingly high demand for career counselling services and but acute paucity of trained professionals. The key people who are delivering career services are: teachers, social workers, human resource managers, IT professionals, representatives of professional bodies and industry associations. In fact most of the successful companies delivering career services are being run by people who are self-taught individuals who just 'wanted to help' young persons choose a suitable career trajectory. There is not any mechanism in place to ensure that the service is being professionally delivered.



#### Theme #4 - Leading innovative change for the future.

In your country...

16. What are the key innovations or ways that career development programmes and services have changed over the last 10 years? This could include changes relating to technology, practice, management and governance and the use of new theories and evidence.

At the central government level:

At the central level most important change took place in 2015 when National Career Service was launched as a mission mode project replacing National Employment Service which aimed at transforming traditional employment exchanges in to career centres. This project has many firsts to its credit:

a. In the earlier system, focus was on job brokerage and career decision support remained at the periphery. In the new system facilitating effective career decision making was expected to take primacy. This was a paradigm shift indeed.

b. The term mission mode implies that projects have clearly defined objectives, scope, implementation timelines and milestones, as well as measurable outcomes and service levels. It was the first time that a government initiative in careers sector was launched with remarkable and unprecedented clarity of operational details

d. Low usage of information technology has been one of the key criticisms of employment exchanges. At the same time, compulsion to visit the employment offices also limited its usage, In order to address these criticisms, ICT-based national platform is in operation as an interface among different stakeholders.

e. National Career Service takes a blended approach supplementing online services with more personalised offline mode facilitated at Model Career Centres.

e.. As another experiment, the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) has collaborated with the Government to run three MCCs . At the same time, some MCC were given to private companies. It was the first time that corporate houses and industry associations were given the responsibilities of running a PES .

4. In terms of staffing, a new experiment was conducted by recruiting Young Professionals (YPs) , individuals who can successfully drive, achieve and sustain the objectives of the National Career Service .

#### Initiatives of State Government

Besides implementing schemes of central government, state governments are running their own initiatives as well. Efforts made by the Directorate of Higher Secondary Education, Government of Kerala is a case in point (Paul, 207). In this case, a special Career Guidance and Adolescent Counselling Cell has been created in the directorate which receives substantial budget and oversees its scale up across secondary schools of the province.

The State Council of Education Research and Training in the state of Himchal Pradesh has also started conducting special training programmes on career counselling for the in-service teachers.

#### Initiatives by School Boards

A number of school boards, e.g, Central Board of Secondary Education has started conducting SGAI(The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) which has been taken up by many hundred thousand students . At the same time, this Board has put Career Counselling as of the key themes for their in-service teacher training programme.

#### Initiative by voluntary organisations

A number of interesting innovations have been done by the different voluntary organisations. For example, Jiva Project of The Promise Foundation takes the theoretical stance of cultural preparedness approach in service delivery and capacity building; SAMVADA runs training courses on career guidance specially for persons from disadvantaged communities through its community college emphasizing social justice as a key objective; MyQuest initiative of QUEST Alliance uses technology creatively to assist young persons in vocational sector; Aga Khan Foundation takes a community driven approach to guide rural youths.

17. How do national policies and initiatives, where they exist, ensure and support the development of innovation in career development services provision?

Education and employment fall in the concurrent list of the Indian constitution. Hence both the central and state governments are competent to enact legislation and initiate schemes on the subject of career counselling and career development services. While National Career Service gives broad guidelines of the activities to be conducted , state governments s are free to design their specific programmes and events. University Grants Commission, the funding agency of the higher

educational institutions in India, supports establishment of career guidance centres but gives sufficient freedom for designing and delivering innovative programmes. Existing policies may not ensure in specific terms but they do support any innovation proposed by implementing agencies.

18. What new, innovative and promising interventions in career development programmes and services is your country planning for the future? How are such innovations making the most of open data initiatives, online technologies, artificial intelligence and other forms of innovation?

Recent interventions have already been listed in response to question number 16 . The key objective for future is to consolidate what has been initiated. We aim to address the weak points pointed out by users and researchers (eg., Kumar 2015). Inadequate coverage and doubtful quality of available services are key issues of concern we are struggling with.

19. How is the training and continuing professional development (CPD) of careers professionals encouraging innovation and taking account of new evidence as well as changes in technology and the labour market?

Training of careers professionals in India remains grossly inadequate limited to very few courses and programmes . An informal review of extant course curricula designed for preparing careers practitioners shows that changes in labour market and role of information and communication technology in the process of career delivery are being discussed in few of these courses. Generally, course curricula are silent on taking account of new evidence and encouraging innovation.

### Final reflections

20. Is there anything else that you could like to address through participating in this symposium?

Through participating in this symposium, we would like to learn the ways in which:

professionalisation of the career practitioners is taking place in other countries;

frameworks of ethical practices are balancing imperatives stemming out from individual, policies and labour market; and

recent technological innovations are being harnessed by career policy makers and practitioners.