

# Future of Growth and Employment in the Global South

## *A Case Study of IBSA*



*Discussion Paper*

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*Published by*



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## Executive Summary

In the context of the G20 and the establishment of the IBSA Dialogue forum in 2003, the significance of India, Brazil, and South Africa in the Global South can hardly be exaggerated. These democracies despite their diversities, are experiencing growth and are emphasising job creation for the future, and prioritising workforce enhancement through skill development to meet evolving market demands.

Economic growth in such economies is typically accompanied by a rise in job opportunities, which must be met with sufficient and high-quality employment avenues. Enhancing economic growth requires a comprehensive strategy, and it is in this context, that the paper explores the significance of four key sectors: Gig, Digital, Green, and Care. These four sectors form the backbone of the economy but have some common barriers to growth and development.

Most developing economies in the Global South face growth and employment challenges and opportunities in the Gig, Digital, Green, and Care sectors. The Digital sector spurs growth but needs to address disparities in access to technology. The Gig

sector offers flexibility but needs balanced policies for job security. The Green economy holds potential in renewables but requires upskilling of workforce. The Care economy sees rising demand, but needs to formulate policies for affordable services and fair working conditions. Balancing flexibility and protection are the key to sustainable development.

A meticulous review of existing policies and frameworks in the afore-mentioned sectors will help in the identification of desired policy interventions. This necessitates an examination of the IBSA countries for identifying commonalities that serve as catalysts to growth. The exercise will offer valuable insights across the three countries, and aid the generation of a future roadmap. The aim is to optimise workforce utilisation by creating suitable job opportunities that will engender inclusive growth.

The paper also highlights sector specific policy recommendations that will foster inclusive and sustainable growth of jobs. These include conducting a thorough analysis and identification of best practices complemented by successful policy interventions that will promote gender neutrality in respect of wages and economic opportunities across all sectors.

*Since the inception of the IBSA Dialogue Forum in 2003, the matter of employment has held a central position in its agenda*

*IBSA is a special forum that brings together three large democracies and economies from three different continents that are dealing with comparable issues*



## Introduction

Although growth poses its own set of difficulties, it also opens up employment opportunities. However, ensuring sufficient and quality jobs remains a challenge. Nevertheless, four sectors — the Gig, Digital, Green, and Care economies — show promise in addressing these challenges.

Collaboration between policymakers, businesses, and society is essential to foster inclusive and sustainable growth, invest in education and training, support innovation and entrepreneurship, and implement policies that protect workers' rights and well-being. Ultimately, the aim is to achieve economic growth alongside a fair and inclusive society where individuals have access to fulfilling and decent employment prospects.

The Discussion Paper focuses on developments in IBSA, which are major economies in the Global South and will be holding the G20 presidency in succession, starting with India (2023), followed by Brazil (2024) and South Africa (2025). The contiguous G-20 Presidency offers opportunities to IBSA to bring about certain changes in unison. The purpose is to look at the sectors identified above in the context of IBSA to create a global compact for growth and employment.

## IBSA's Role in Shaping Global Employment Policies

Since the establishment of the G20 in 1999, employment has remained a prominent concern. Similarly, since the inception of the IBSA Dialogue Forum in 2003, the matter of employment has held a central position in its agenda. Both forums emphasise better job creation in future and improvement of the workforce through skilling, re-skilling, and up-skilling in order to meet the growing demand of the future job market.

India, Brazil, South Africa (IBSA) is a special forum that brings together three large democracies and economies from three different continents that are dealing with comparable issues. South Africa, Brazil, and India are all growing economies and are pluralistic, multicultural, multi-ethnic, multilingual, and multireligious states. They also exhibit other interesting commonalities: they are democracies faced with internal social challenges, they are strategically located in different parts of the world, they have relevant participation in various forms of developing countries, and they are all eager to strengthen their international roles.

IBSA member countries see the forum not only as a tool to make their international voice more



*IBSA member countries see the forum not only as a tool to strengthen their international voice on issues of common interest but also to facilitate connections between IBSA countries*

audible on issues of common interest but also to facilitate connections among IBSA countries. It has been a successful manifestation of South-South cooperation and its capacities are likely to further flourish in the days to come.

The first IBSA Labour Ministers' Meeting held in Brasilia, Brazil, in 2007 highlighted the importance of employment policies that promote decent work and protect workers' rights.

They aim to strengthen the IBSA initiative, a prominent multi-lateral platform representing the Global South, to define the parameters and benchmarks for a Global Compact on Growth and Employment. Their objective is to convene essential stakeholders for in-depth discussions and deliberations concerning the intricate challenges that lie ahead in the realm of employment, focusing on three critical aspects: skills, social security, and the gig economy.

The objective of the initiative to draft a global compact is to ideate on the imperative of coming together with the global community of key stakeholders on 'Growth and Employment' under the G20 multilateral initiative. The purpose is to orient the leaders of the Employment20 Group (E20 of G20) in the direction of a 'Global Compact on Growth and Employment' with implementable actions at the national and

international levels. Based on our informed deliberations, we will plug into the E20 agenda of G20.

## **A Collaborative Initiative by IBSA during their G20 Presidencies**

As India is holding the G20 presidency in 2023, which will be followed by Brazil in 2024 and South Africa in 2025, the proposed initiative (of forming a global compact) will be a collaborative one among some reputed economic policy think- and action tanks of India, Brazil, and South Africa.

The initiative focuses on thematic issues such as the changing nature of growth, the future of work and skills requirements, social security ecosystems, and sectoral opportunities such as green jobs, care, gig, and digital economy.

This Discussion Paper delves into the future of jobs, growth and employment in the Global South. By examining emerging trends and potential challenges, the paper offers insights into the evolving employment landscape and the policy implications for fostering inclusive and sustainable job growth.

As the global economy undergoes transformative changes, the gig, care, digital, and green economy sectors are expected to play a



*This Discussion Paper delves into the future of jobs, growth and employment in the Global South*

pivotal role in shaping the future of jobs and growth.

### Takeaways

The future of growth and employment in the Global South presents challenges and opportunities, with four key sectors showing promise: the Gig, Digital, Green, and Care economies. While these sectors can drive economic growth and create employment opportunities, they also raise critical issues that need to be addressed for inclusive and sustainable development.

- **Digital Economy:** It is a catalyst for economic growth and development. However, ensuring equitable access to technology and connectivity remains a challenge, especially in rural and marginalised communities. Policymakers should focus on expanding internet connectivity, enhancing digital infrastructure, and promoting digital literacy programmes to bridge the digital divide and provide equal job opportunities.
- **Gig Economy:** It has witnessed rapid growth, offering flexible
- **Green Economy:** It offers significant growth potential in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and eco-friendly practices. Transitioning to a green economy requires upskilling and reskilling the workforce to meet the demands of these sectors. Public-private partnerships can play a vital role in promoting green growth and environmental sustainability.
- **Care Economy:** It is witnessing increased demand for various care services, creating job opportunities in caregiving professions. Policies should focus on enhancing the availability, affordability, and quality of care services while

work opportunities. However, it also faces criticism on account of inadequacies in the domains of job security, worker rights, and social protection.

Policymakers must strike a balance between flexibility and protection to promote a sustainable gig economy. Implementing labour reforms and providing social security benefits for gig workers are crucial steps in this direction.





ensuring decent work conditions for care workers. Integrating technology into caregiving can improve efficiency and accessibility, but investment in digital infrastructure and training is necessary.

Overall, achieving inclusive and sustainable growth in the Global South requires collaboration among policymakers, businesses, and society. Prioritising fair wages, benefits, workplace safety, and opportunities for growth across these sectors is essential.

Additionally, addressing gender inequality and social protection for workers in these sectors is imperative to the building of a fair and inclusive society. By leveraging the potential of the Gig, Digital, Green, and Care economies and implementing well-thought-out policies, the Global South can pave the way for a prosperous future with fulfilling and decent employment prospects.

***Achieving inclusive and sustainable growth in the Global South requires collaboration among policymakers, businesses, and society***

## Future of Work in IBSA

The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) is expected to have a decisive impact on the future of work. It involves the convergence of various technologies, such as artificial intelligence, robotics, cloud computing, and the Internet of Things. This convergence will lead to the transformation of production processes, business

models, service delivery, employment relationships, and social protection frameworks. While some jobs may become obsolete, new jobs will be created.

The speed and reach of technological advancement in this revolution are believed to be unprecedented. It is important to examine the localised impact of 4IR, as its effects on the future of work are likely to be shaped by local political, legal, and socio-economic structures.

While many tasks can technically be automated, the adoption of specific technologies depends on various factors, including labour costs, education and skill levels, legal frameworks, labour protection policies, infrastructure availability, and societal attitudes towards technological change and innovation.

### India

Employment opportunities are influenced by technological innovations, demographic shifts, climate change, and globalisation. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on youth employment, with higher unemployment rates among young people compared to older age groups.

India faces challenges in recovering from the economic impact of the pandemic particularly in terms of youth employment. However, there are opportunities to accommodate



the future workforce in the green economy, care sector, and digital industry. The green economy is expected to create millions of jobs, but one must address the anterior need for awareness and skill development in this area.

Access to digital resources and technical proficiency are vital for young people to participate in the digital sector. The care economy, encompassing education, healthcare, and domestic work, will continue to be a major employer, requiring investments to ensure decent work and social protection for workers.<sup>1</sup>

*The green economy is expected to create millions of jobs*

Skill development and entrepreneurship are crucial for improving youth resilience and creating more opportunities for decent labour. The pandemic disrupted skill development programmes, particularly in low-income countries. Women have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic, but there is an opportunity to close the gender gap by investing in education and reducing gender discrimination.<sup>2</sup>

- **Digital Transformation:** India is experiencing a rapid digital transformation, fuelled by increasing internet penetration and smartphone adoption. As of January 2024, India has over 820 million internet users, making it the second-largest online market globally.<sup>3,4</sup> The digital economy is expected to reach US\$1tn by 2025, thereby



engendering job opportunities in sectors such as e-commerce, fintech, digital marketing, and cybersecurity.<sup>5</sup>

- **Remote Work and Gig Economy:** The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the adoption of remote work in India. In the year 2019-20, it was estimated that there were 6.8 million gig workers in India, accounting for 2.4 per cent of the non-farm workforce or 1.3 per cent of the total workers. Moving to 2020-21, the number of gig workers increased to 7.7 million, constituting 2.6 per cent of the non-agricultural workforce or 1.5 per cent of the total workforce. Looking ahead to 2029-30, the gig workforce is projected to reach 23.5 million, making up 6.7 per cent of the non-agricultural workforce or 4.1 per cent of the total workforce in India.<sup>6</sup>
- **Automation and Artificial Intelligence:** These are rapidly reshaping the Indian job market. According to a recent report by a market analytics firm, Forester, on the 'Future of Jobs Forecast between 2020 and 2040, predicts that 69 per cent of Indian jobs are theoretically under the threat of automation by 2040.<sup>7</sup> However, automation also creates new job roles.<sup>8</sup> The demand for AI professionals, data scientists, and robotic engineers is on the rise. Upskilling in emerging

*Organisations are implementing policies to promote diversity, equal opportunities, and inclusive work cultures*

technologies will be crucial for individuals to retain their relevance in the changing job landscape.

- **Start-up Ecosystem:** India's startup ecosystem ranks third globally and is projected to experience a steady annual growth of 12-15 per cent. As of December 31, 2023, The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) recognises 1,17,254 startups in India.<sup>9</sup> A report by Nasscom draws attention to the fact that India added over 1,300 active tech startups last year, taking the total tally of active tech startups to 25,000-27,000 as of February 2023.<sup>10</sup>

It is anticipated that there will be an increase in the number of tech startups from 68 thousand in 2023 to 1.8 Lakh in 2030. This will lead to a substantial rise in job opportunities.<sup>11</sup>

Over the years, startups in the country have managed to generate over 12.42 lakh direct jobs.<sup>12</sup> The government's initiatives such as "Start-up India" and supportive policies have further fuelled the growth of entrepreneurship.<sup>13</sup>

- **Skill Development:** Skill development training is vital for the future of work in India. To take this initiative further, the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) 4.0 (FY 2023-26) was announced in the last Union Budget 2023-24. The

scheme aims to skill lakhs of youth and provide training in courses on Industry 4.0, AI, robotics, mechatronics, IoT, and drones. As of December 13, 2023, a total of 6,62,750 candidates have been enrolled of which 3,42,500 candidates have completed their training.

- Furthermore, the Directorate General of Training (DGT) under the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship has conducted the 2<sup>nd</sup> Kaushal Deekshant Samaroh (Skill Convocation Ceremony) for more than 14000 ITIs at the National, State, and ITI levels on October 12, 2023, for more than 8.5 lakh trainees. Also, the DGT has allowed ITIs to run drone-related courses in ITIs in session 2022 for 116 ITIs and 32 ITIs in session 2023.<sup>14</sup>

- **Diversity and Inclusion:** There is a growing focus on diversity and inclusion in the Indian workplace. Recent data indicates an increased representation of women in the workforce. The Periodic Labour Force Survey Report 2022-23 released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation on October 19, 2023, shows that the Female Labour Force Participation Rate in the country has improved significantly by 4.2 percentage points to 37.0% in 2023.<sup>15</sup> Organisations are implementing policies to promote diversity, equal

*Currently, the green industry in India employs approximately 18.5 million individuals, and it is expected to create an additional 3.7 million jobs by 2025*

opportunities, and inclusive work cultures.

Large companies have been at the forefront of diversity, inclusion, and belonging (DI&B) efforts. Over two-thirds of these companies are either aware or highly sensitive to the importance of DI&B. Among the large organisations surveyed, 37 per cent have established formal DI&B policies, and 33 per cent have implemented these policies.

On the other hand, 73 per cent of small businesses have limited awareness or no awareness at all regarding DI&B. However, a significant proportion of medium (19 per cent) and small organisations (12 per cent) are progressing towards formalising DI&B initiatives, which is marginally higher compared to the percentage of large organisations (10 per cent) on the same path.<sup>16</sup>

- **Green Jobs and Sustainability:**

Environmental sustainability is gaining prominence in India's work landscape. India's dedication to achieving a 500-gigawatt clean energy target by 2030 has resulted in a significant surge in the demand for green jobs. In January 2023, there was an 81 per cent annual increase in this demand, observed primarily in metropolitan cities. As a result, investments in the green sector have surpassed those in

conventional fuel-based projects, leading to the creation of numerous job opportunities across the industry.<sup>17</sup> Currently, the green industry in India employs approximately 18.5 million individuals, and it is expected to create an additional 3.7 million jobs by 2025.<sup>18</sup>

As per a survey by Naukri.com, the average year-on-year growth in green jobs was around 27 per cent in October 2023 vs October 2022.<sup>19</sup> Industries like Industrial Products, Heavy Machinery, and Waste Management have witnessed the highest demand for hiring in this sector.

This surge in green job postings on the Found It platform is unprecedented, indicating that both private and public sector companies are incorporating environmental, social, and governance (ESG) practices as a fundamental aspect of their business operations and transition to clean energy practices.

This drive towards sustainability is creating job opportunities in sectors such as renewable energy, energy efficiency, waste management, and sustainable agriculture.<sup>20</sup>

In summary, the future of work in India is underlined by digital transformation, remote work, skill development, entrepreneurial growth, and a focus on diversity and sustainability. Embracing these

trends and investing in relevant skills will be crucial for individuals and organisations to thrive in the evolving job market.

## Brazil

The future of work in Brazil<sup>21</sup> is being shaped by technological innovations, which exercise a significant impact on various aspects such as education, vocational training, skills, demographic transition, climate change, and labour markets.

Technological advancements, by virtue of their speed, scope, and systemic nature, are transforming industries and employment at an exponential pace. In Brazil, automation is gradually spreading through investments by larger companies, particularly in leading sectors.

E-commerce and digital advertising are growing rapidly, driven by mobile phone apps, although inequalities loom large with respect to digital access and proficiency across different socioeconomic groups. The platform economy, or gig economy, is also expanding in Brazil, fostering entrepreneurship and creating opportunities for independent contractors and self-employed workers.<sup>22</sup>

- **Digital Transformation:**

According to a study by the Inter-American Development Bank, automation could potentially impact around 30 per cent of jobs in Brazil by 2026. The World Economic

Forum's Future of Jobs Report 2023 estimated that 53 per cent of all employees in Brazil will require significant reskilling or upskilling by 2025 due to technological advancements.<sup>23</sup>

The increased use of cloud technologies in Brazil has resulted in the creation of approximately 2.7 million jobs which has boosted the country's GDP by almost US\$120bn. Latin America and the Caribbean have several technology sectors that hold significant untapped potential, including fintech, AGTech, artificial intelligence, automation, synthetic biology, renewable energies, virtual reality, and the Internet of Things.<sup>24</sup>

Brazil has developed a comprehensive digital transformation strategy called the E-Digital Strategy, which aims to drive the adoption of digital technologies across various sectors. The strategy recognises key factors that facilitate this transformation and explores the digitalisation of both government operations and the economy.

A report by Forbes stated that the aim is to digitalise 90 per cent of all businesses operating in the industrial sector in Brazil under Brazil's New Industrial Policy (the current percentage of companies that operate digitally in the sector is 23.5 per cent).<sup>25</sup>

It acknowledges the evolving market landscape and

*The World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Report 2023 estimated that 53 per cent of all employees in Brazil will require significant reskilling or upskilling by 2025 due to technological advancements*

*By leveraging the potential of the Gig, Digital, Green, and Care economies and implementing thoughtful policies, the Global South can pave the way for a prosperous future with fulfilling and decent employment prospects*

emphasises the importance of a data-driven economy and new business models, particularly in agriculture, industry, and services.

However, a report by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 2020 identified three major challenges that hinder the drive for digital transformation in Brazil. These challenges include insufficient infrastructure, high costs resulting from the tax system, and financial limitations such as limited access to financing. These factors pose disadvantages for companies seeking to adopt digital technologies in Brazil.<sup>26</sup>

- **Remote Work and Gig Economy:** During the COVID-19 pandemic, remote work became widespread in Brazil. A report by the Latin American Post states that around 9.5 million Brazilians are working remotely. According to a government study, around 7.4 million Brazilians work remotely from locations separate from their company's offices with computer equipment. Another 2.1 million work remotely but are not connected to their companies through computer equipment, as per a comprehensive survey conducted at the end of 2022 by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE).<sup>27</sup>

A report by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) states that approximately 22 per cent of Brazilian workers will continue to work remotely even after the pandemic. According to a survey conducted by McKinsey & Company, Brazil's digital freelance workforce grew by 47 per cent between 2016 and 2019. According to a report published by Statista, in the third quarter of 2023, Brazil recorded its lowest unemployment rate in recent years, with just 7.8 per cent of the available working-age population out of work. With around 100 million people employed, the country has maintained an employment rate between 57 and 51 per cent in recent years. In addition, around 69 per cent of the workforce is constituted by employed workers, and a quarter is self-employed.<sup>28</sup>

- **Skill Development:** LinkedIn 2020 Emerging Jobs Report<sup>29</sup> highlighted that the fastest-growing job roles in Brazil were related to technology, including artificial intelligence specialists, data scientists, and cybersecurity specialists.

According to the Brazilian Association of Information Technology and Communication Companies (BRASSCOM), Brazil will need 159,000 new professionals every year until 2025, while currently training just over 50,000 people per year.<sup>30</sup>



*The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) is expected to have a decisive impact on the future of work. It involves the convergence of various technologies, such as artificial intelligence, robotics, cloud computing, and the Internet of Things*

- **Green Jobs and Sustainability:**

Brazil is one of the world's leading producers of renewable energy. The Brazilian Wind Energy Association (ABEEólica) reported that wind power capacity in Brazil reached 25.63GW with 904 powerplants, representing an increase of 18.85 per cent compared to the previous year.<sup>31</sup> The agricultural sector in Brazil is also focusing on sustainable practices. The Brazilian Forest Code, for instance, promotes reforestation and the restoration of native vegetation, which can create employment opportunities in sustainable agriculture and forestry.<sup>32</sup>

- **Inclusive Workforce:**

According to the World Bank collection of development indicators, the labour force participation rate, female (per cent of female population ages 15+) (national estimate) in Brazil was reported at 53.75 per cent in 2022.<sup>33</sup> A study by the Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA) revealed that racial inequality remains a challenge in the Brazilian labour market, with workers of colour facing higher unemployment rates and lower wages compared to their counterparts.<sup>34</sup>

These data provide insights into the current landscape and future projections of the work

environment in Brazil, emphasising the need for strategic planning and targeted actions to shape a positive and inclusive future for work in the country.

## South Africa

In South Africa, the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) represents both a threat and an opportunity. The country is facing high unemployment rates, inequality, and declining GDP growth, but technology-driven advancements offer the potential to create high-quality jobs and boost economic growth.<sup>35</sup>

Digitisation, machine learning, and automation may displace some jobs, but they also have the potential to create new employment opportunities across various sectors. South Africa can leverage technology to improve productivity, increase per capita income, and drive real gains in sectors like retail, mining, and banking.

The adoption of technology consequent upon the 4IR also presents opportunities for women, by potentially increasing their participation in the workforce and creating new jobs for them. However, the changing nature of work will require higher levels of skill and greater investment in human capital, simultaneously necessitating collaboration among government, business, and educational institutions.<sup>36,37</sup>

*The report by McKinsey & Company estimates that machine learning, artificial intelligence, and advanced robotics could lead to the loss of 3.3 million existing jobs in South Africa by 2030*

Overall, the future of work in these countries is being shaped by technological advancements, and while there are challenges and disruptions, there are also significant opportunities for job creation and economic growth.

Governments, businesses, educational institutions, and individuals need to collaborate and invest in skill development, digital resources, and sectors with a potential to generate a positive and inclusive workforce in the future.

- **Automation and Artificial Intelligence (AI):** According to a report by the World Bank, around 35 per cent of jobs in South Africa are susceptible to automation in the coming years. The World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Report 2020 states that 39 per cent of jobs in South Africa could be automated by 2025.<sup>38</sup> The report by McKinsey & Company estimates that machine learning, artificial intelligence, and advanced robotics could lead to the loss of 3.3 million existing jobs in South Africa by 2030. The study also points out that more than 570,000 new jobs will be created in the healthcare and social assistance sectors and more than 260,000 in the construction sector.<sup>39</sup>
- **Digitalisation and Remote Work:** A study by the Digital Transformation Initiative estimated that remote work in South Africa could potentially create economic gains of up to R164 billion (US\$11bn) annually. A report by Globaldata observed that the South African information and communication technologies (ICT) market was valued at US\$33.45bn in 2022 and will grow at a compounded annual rate (CAGR) of 8.20 per cent to reach a value of US\$49.60bn by 2027.<sup>40</sup> The Digital Economy for Africa (DE4A) initiative was introduced by the World Bank Group in 2019 to achieve universal digital empowerment for individuals, businesses, and governments across Africa by 2030. This initiative aligns with the African Union's Digital Transformation Strategy from 2020 to 2030.<sup>41</sup>
- **Skills Demand and Job Market:** The Future of Jobs Report 2020<sup>42</sup> identified the top emerging skills in South Africa, including analytical thinking and innovation, active learning, and resilience. The South African Government's Medium-Term Strategic Framework<sup>43</sup> highlights the need for skill development in areas such as artificial intelligence, robotics, data science, and cybersecurity.
- **Entrepreneurship and the Gig Economy:** According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, the quality of the overall entrepreneurial environment in South Africa, as

assessed by its national experts and summarised in the National Entrepreneurial Context Index (NECI), had improved from a score of 3.7 in 2021 to 4.1 in 2022, but fell back to just 3.6 in 2023, third lowest of the 49 GEM participating economies. The level of total early-stage Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA) in South Africa has fluctuated a great deal: from 17.5 per cent in 2021 to 8.5 per cent in 2022, and then up to 11.1 per cent in 2023.<sup>44</sup> The Global Mobile Consumer Survey by Deloitte revealed that 29 per cent of South African respondents engaged in some form of gig work or freelance activities in 2020.

every dollar that men earn.<sup>47</sup>

The Quarterly Labour Force Survey indicated that the unemployment rate in South Africa dropped to 31.9 per cent in the third quarter of 2023 from 32.6 per cent in the second quarter of 2023.<sup>48</sup>

These data bear tangible evidence of the current landscape and future projections for the work environment in South Africa. By leveraging these insights, policymakers, businesses, and individuals can make informed decisions to shape a more prosperous, equitable, and inclusive future of the workforce in the country.

*The green economy is expected to create millions of jobs, but one must address the anterior need for awareness and skills development in this area*

- **Sustainable Development and Green Jobs:**

South Africa's Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme (REIPPPP) has attracted an investment of over R354.2 billion in South Africa's economy for energy infrastructure, creating jobs in renewable energy projects.<sup>45</sup> The South African Government's Green Economy Accord aims to create 300,000 jobs in the renewable energy, manufacturing, and agriculture sectors by 2030.<sup>46</sup>

- **Inclusive Workforce and Addressing Inequality:** South Africa reported that the gender pay gap remains significant, to the extent that every month women earn about 72 cents for

## Comparative Analysis of Future Work in IBSA Countries

The future of work in the IBSA countries is being shaped by technological advancements and presents both challenges and opportunities. Across these countries, there is a growing emphasis on digital transformation, remote work, skill development, entrepreneurship, sustainability, and inclusivity.

Here are some key takeaways:

- **Digital Transformation:** All three countries are experiencing rapid digital transformation, leading to the growth of the digital economy. Embracing

technological innovations and digital skills will be crucial for individuals and businesses to thrive in the evolving job market.

- **Remote Work and Gig**

**Economy:** The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of remote work and the gig economy in India, Brazil, and South Africa. These trends are likely to continue, creating opportunities for independent contractors and self-employed workers.

- **Skill Development:** Upskilling and reskilling programmes are essential in all three countries to bridge the skill gap and prepare the workforce for jobs of the future, especially those in the emerging technology fields.

- **Entrepreneurship and the Start-up Ecosystem:** The start-up ecosystems in India and Brazil are thriving, engendering numerous job opportunities. Supportive policies and initiatives on the part of the respective governments have fuelled the growth of entrepreneurship.

- **Green Jobs and Sustainability:** The focus on environmental sustainability is gaining prominence in all three countries, leading to the creation of green jobs in sectors like renewable energy, waste management, and sustainable agriculture.

- **Inclusivity and Diversity:**

Efforts towards diversity and inclusivity are increasing, with a particular focus on gender equality in the workforce. Addressing inequalities and promoting inclusive job creation strategies are essential for a prosperous future.

- **Automation and AI:** While automation and AI offer opportunities for productivity gains, there also lurks the potential threat of job displacement. Preparing for the changing nature of work and investing in higher skill levels will be vital under the circumstances.

- **Government Initiatives:**

Governments in these countries are taking steps to promote skill development, digitalisation, and sustainable practices. Collaborative efforts among governments, businesses, and educational institutions are necessary to shape a positive future for the workforce.

On the whole, embracing technological advancements, investing in skills, promoting sustainability, and ensuring inclusivity are key factors in shaping a positive future of work in India, Brazil, and South Africa. By addressing challenges and seizing opportunities, these countries can create a resilient and dynamic workforce in the years to come.

*India's startup ecosystem ranks third globally and is projected to experience a steady annual growth of 12-15 per cent*

## Policy Recommendations

### G20

#### Future of Work Task Force:

Establishment of a dedicated Future of Work Task Force within the G20 that brings together experts, policymakers, and stakeholders to comprehensively address the impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) on the global workforce. The task force should:

- Conduct in-depth research and analysis on the evolving nature of work, including automation, AI, and digitalisation.
- Identify best practices and successful policy interventions from member countries to address challenges arising from these technological advancements.
- Develop a set of guiding principles for labour protection, upskilling, and workforce transition, ensuring inclusivity and social protection.

#### Investment in Digital

**Infrastructure:** Encourage G20 member countries to prioritise the development and expansion of digital infrastructure, including high-speed broadband and 5G networks, particularly in underserved and rural areas. This should involve:

- Collaboration among governments, private sector entities, and international organisations to secure funding for infrastructure projects.
- Setting targets for equitable access to digital resources,

promoting digital literacy, and ensuring affordable internet access for all citizens.

#### National Skills Development

**Programmes:** Facilitate cross-border cooperation among G20 nations to foster skill development, reskilling, and upskilling programmes. This can be achieved by:

- Sharing successful models of training and inculcation of skills to capacitate the workforce for engaging effectively with emerging industries.
- Establishing a global skills recognition framework to enhance labour mobility and enable individuals to work across borders seamlessly.

#### Support for Start-ups and Small

**Businesses:** Promote an enabling environment for start-ups and small businesses through targeted policies that encourage innovation and entrepreneurship. This includes:

- Creating a G20-wide platform for start-up collaboration, providing resources, mentorship, and access to international markets.
- Developing uniform guidelines for regulatory simplification, reducing bureaucratic barriers, and facilitating access to funding and venture capital.

#### Gender Equality and Diversity:

Advocate gender equality and diversity in the workforce by sharing successful policies and practices among member

*The future of work in India is underlined by digital transformation, remote work, skill development, entrepreneurial growth, and a focus on diversity and sustainability. Embracing these trends and investing in relevant skills will be crucial for individuals and organisations to thrive in the evolving job market*

*E-commerce and digital advertising are growing rapidly, driven by mobile phone apps, although inequalities loom large in respect of digital access and proficiency across different socioeconomic groups*

countries. This involves:

- Implementing measures to close the gender pay gap, increase women's representation in leadership roles, and foster inclusive workplaces.
- Establishing a G20 Gender Equality Initiative to track progress, exchange best practices, and identify and address gender-based discrimination and bias.

### **Sustainable Development and Green Jobs:**

Integrate sustainable development goals into economic policies and investments, with a focus on creating green jobs and promoting environmental sustainability. This entails:

- Collaborating on initiatives to accelerate the transition to renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and circular economy practices.
- Establishing a G20 Green Jobs Fund to support research, training, and job creation in eco-friendly industries.

### **IBSA Forum**

#### **Future of Work Cooperation:**

Promote collaboration among IBSA countries to address the unique challenges of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Create a joint working group to:

- Share insights on successful strategies for transitioning to the digital economy, protecting vulnerable workers, and harnessing the potential of automation and AI.

- Establish a regional digital skills consortium to align education and training programmes with the needs of the industry.

#### **Cross-Border Skill Exchange:**

Facilitate skill exchange programmes among IBSA countries to address the paucity of skills in specific sectors. This includes:

- Recognising and aligning qualifications across borders to encourage labour mobility and attract skilled professionals from within the region.
- Launching joint apprenticeship programmes to provide practical experience and enhance vocational training.

#### **Innovation and Entrepreneurship Support:**

Strengthen the start-up ecosystem and encourage and support entrepreneurship by sharing resources, expertise, and best practices. This involves:

- Organising joint innovation summits and expos to showcase emerging businesses and technology-driven solutions.
- Establishing an IBSA Innovation Fund to finance collaborative start-up ventures and tech projects.

#### **Technology Transfer and Capacity Building:**

Promote knowledge sharing and technology transfer among IBSA countries to enhance their technological capabilities. This includes:

- Facilitating partnerships between research institutions,



*The future of jobs in the gig, care, digital, and green economy sectors in India, Brazil, and South Africa presents both opportunities and challenges*

universities, and tech companies for collaborative projects.

- Creating a regional technology transfer network to ensure the efficient exchange of expertise and knowledge.

#### **Inclusive Workforce Strategies:**

Collaborate on inclusive job creation strategies to address inequality and promote equal opportunities. This entails:

- Developing joint policies that encourage diversity in the workplace, eradicate discrimination, and ensure equal pay for equal work.
- Establishing an IBSA Inclusivity Alliance to drive collective action towards creating more equitable and diverse work environments.

#### **Green Economy and**

**Sustainability:** Leverage combined resources and expertise to drive the development of green economy initiatives. This involves:

- Sharing experiences in implementing renewable energy projects, sustainable agriculture practices, and waste management solutions.
- Establishing a tripartite IBSA Green Economy Partnership to support joint research, investment, and policy implementation in eco-friendly sectors.

By implementing these policy recommendations to their finest details, the G20 and IBSA nations can adeptly confront the challenges

and capitalise on the opportunities emerging from the evolving global economy. Collaborative efforts and focused measures are paramount in forging a future of work that is sustainable, equitable, and prosperous for their respective populations.

## **Conclusion**

The future of jobs in the gig, care, digital, and green economy sectors in India, Brazil, and South Africa presents both opportunities and challenges. By proactively addressing policy implications, investing in skill development, and ensuring inclusivity, these countries can prepare their workforce for the changing world of work, foster inclusive and sustainable job growth, and seize the potential benefits offered by these emerging sectors.

The digital, gig, green, and care economies are transforming the economic landscapes of IBSA. To leverage the potential thrown up by these sectors, policymakers must address challenges such as unequal access, job insecurity, environmental sustainability, and gender inequalities.

By adopting a holistic approach and implementing appropriate policy interventions, IBSA countries can go a long way in fostering inclusive and sustainable growth that will benefit not only their economies but their societies as well.

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