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AGRICULTURE

1. Diksha Bali, Abdulla and Jyoti Kachroo

Farmer Producer Organisations and the Technical Efficiency of Vegetables Crops

EPW, Vol. 61, Issue No. 2, 10 January, 2026

The influence of farmer producer organisation's membership on the technical efficiency of vegetable crops is examined using a sample survey of 300 vegetable farmers equally distributed for FPO members and non-members from three districts in Jammu and Kashmir. The results reveal that FPO members consistently achieve higher crop outputs, with significant differences in input utilisation. Technical efficiency scores demonstrate that FPO membership is strongly associated with higher technical efficiency, especially for brinjal and potato farming. Further, the average technical efficiency of FPO members as compared to non-members across the crops suggests the benefits of shared resources and collective bargaining power.

2. Bikash Das and Daksha Parmar1.

Community Kitchens in the Abandoned Tea Plantations of North Bengal

EPW, Vol. 61, Issue No. 2, 10 January, 2026

State Action against Hunger and Inequality, a poverty-alleviation programme of the Government of West Bengal, was extended to the abandoned tea plantations in the Dooars region, where the tea plantation communities, the majority of whom are tribals, were facing extreme levels of hunger and starvation. Based on empirical evidence from a qualitative research study, the functioning of the SAHAI programme in abandoned tea plantations, the plantation crisis, and hunger deaths in tea plantations in the post-liberalisation period are analysed and located within the broader political and economic context.

3. Michelle Andreolli and Paolo Surico

'Less Is More': Consumer Spending and the Size of Economic Stimulus Payments

American Economic Journal: Macroeconomics, vol. 18, no. 1, January 2026

We study how consumption responds to unexpected, transitory income gains of different sizes using hypothetical questions from the Italian Survey of Household Income and Wealth. Affluent households exhibit higher marginal propensities to consume (MPCs) out of large gains, while liquidity-poor families show higher MPCs out of small gains. The spending patterns of higher earners align with models featuring non-homothetic preferences, whereas borrowing constraints explain the heterogeneity among low-income households. Our findings imply that, for a given fiscal outlay, distributing smaller transfers to a broader group of low-income households stimulates aggregate consumption more effectively than concentrating larger transfers among fewer recipients.

4. Eric Engstrom, Andrey Ermolov and Geert Bekaert

Uncertainty and the Economy: The Evolving Distributions of Aggregate Supply and Demand Shocks

American Economic Journal: Macroeconomics, vol. 18, no. 1, January 2026

We estimate the time-varying distribution of aggregate supply (AS) and aggregate demand (AD) shocks. We distinguish between traditional Gaussian uncertainty and "bad" uncertainty, associated with negative skewness. The Great Moderation is driven by a reduction in the volatility of AS shocks and the Gaussian component of AD shocks. The increased role of "bad" demand uncertainty implies that the conditional skewness of GDP growth and inflation has decreased over time. The correlation between AS/AD shocks and shocks to their conditional volatilities is generally strongly negative. The correlation between inflation and growth shocks has increased due to a decrease in AS volatility.

ECONOMICS

5. Alakh N Sharma

India's Labour Market

EPW, Vol. 61, Issue No. 1, 03 January, 2026

This special issue has been put together by Alakh N Sharma who oversaw the commissioning, refereeing, and the final selection of the papers. EPW is grateful to him for being the Advisory Editor for this issue. —Ed.

India's labour market today is marked by a mix of progress and precarity, a combination that makes interpretation difficult and policy action urgent. On the surface, the country is undergoing a positive shift. Labour force participation has increased across demographic groups, with women accounting for nearly 70% of all new entrants since 2018. Output growth remains high by global standards. Services continue to drive the national growth story, while a renewed industrial strategy signals the state's effort to broaden the base of productive employment. However, as the five papers in this special issue demonstrate, these encouraging signals rest on structural weaknesses that hinder the labour market's ability to generate secure and meaningful work. The deeper story is one of rising participation but stagnant job quality, strong output growth but weak employment elasticity in the formal sector, and higher productivity in select sectors but persistent underemployment for much of the workforce. Understanding this complex labour market pattern is essential for imagining a credible future of work in India.

6. Taniya Banerjee, Manoranjan Dhal

Footloose Labour and the e-Shram Portal

EPW, Vol. 61, Issue No. 2, 10 January, 2026

During the pandemic, the Supreme Court highlighted the need to recognize migrant workers as equal citizens with access to rights. This prompted government considerations for future policies to address crises and infrastructural shortcomings. However, a lack of comprehensive data, political will, and effective policymaking has long neglected migrants. The e-Shram portal

aims to streamline efforts to recognise these disadvantaged workers in the unorganized sector. Nevertheless, questions about its effectiveness in acknowledging migrants as citizens remain, particularly concerning accessibility, universalisation, transparency, and awareness. What situates the “internal migrants” in India at a critical point in the economy is the heterogeneity of their composition, and yet the homogeneity of footlooseness and invisibility. The internal migrants cross the regional boundaries of caste, language, ethnicity, and the self in the process of migration. To comprehend the complexities of internal migration, one needs to move beyond the rigidities of mainstream theories. A dearth of systematic and multidisciplinary theorising can inhibit us from interpreting the underlying everyday politics in the migrants’ lives.

Pravasi in One’s Own Land

According to the 2011 Census, the total internal migration stands at 455.7 million, out of which more than 45 million migrated for work, including self-employed persons. Only 37% of the total population was engaged in work-related migration, excluding “short-term and circular migration,” which constitutes an important share of migrant labour in India. Deshingkar and Akhter (2009) argue that some types of short-term migration are excluded from the seasonal migration data by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO). These include circular migrants (rural to rural) in plantations and commercial farms, rural to urban migrants who migrate to work in small industries for a specific period in a year, as well as short-term seasonal migrants who migrate for more than six months. The NSSO conducts periodic surveys on migration in India, and

7. John A. List

[The Economics of Scaling Early Childhood Programs: Lessons from the Chicago School](#)

[Journal of Political Economy, January 2026](#)

Many ideas succeed in small trials but weaken considerably at scale. Using early childhood investment as a case study, this paper develops a dynamic micro

founded human capital model stylized in the Chicago tradition. The framework features optimizing agents, complementary skill formation, and a policymaker choosing scaling strategies. The model shows that naive extrapolation from pilots systematically overestimates societal impact by overlooking voltage drops: declining benefit-cost profiles due to unrepresentative samples and contexts. Optimal scaling requires option C thinking, a mechanism-based design approach that anticipates these failures through backward induction from real-world implementation constraints. Studies in this special issue enrich the model's insights.

EDUCATION

8. Francesco Agostinelli, Matthias Doepke, Giuseppe Sorrenti, and Fabrizio Zilibotti

[It Takes a Village: The Economics of Parenting with Neighborhood and Peer Effects](#)

[Journal of Political Economy, January 2026](#)

During adolescence, peer interactions become increasingly central to children's development, whereas the direct influence of parent's wanes. Nevertheless, parents can continue to exert leverage by shaping their children's peer groups. We construct and estimate a model of parenting with peer and neighborhood effects where parents intervene in peer formation and show that the model captures empirical patterns of skill accumulation, parenting style, and peer characteristics among US high school students. We find that interventions that move children to better neighborhoods lose impact when they are scaled up, because parents' equilibrium responses push against successful integration with the new peer group.

9. Aysha Malik

[Can Fewer Schools Mean Better Education?](#)

[EPW, Vol. 61, Issue No. 4, 24 January 2026](#)

India's educational discourse has increasingly shifted from an input-based framework to an outcome-oriented paradigm. Within this reorientation, school mergers and closures have emerged as a key policy initiative aimed at rationalising resources and improving learning outcomes. However, this generates a critical tension between the constitutional emphasis on accessible neighbourhood schooling and the pursuit of standardised quality benchmarks. Particularly in rural and marginalised areas, school closures risk undermining equitable access, thereby reframing the policy debate as one focusing on quality versus equality in education policy.

10. James J. Heckman and Jin Zhou

[A Study of the Microdynamics of Early-Childhood Learning](#)

[Journal of Political Economy, January 2026](#)

This paper investigates the weekly evolution of skills as measured by unique data from a widely emulated early-childhood home-visiting program in rural China. The design of the study avoids input endogeneity issues and lack of comparable measures of skills that plague previous studies. Skills, nominally classified as the same, in fact, do not appear to share a common unit scale across levels. They are produced by skill- and life cycle-stage-specific learning processes. A novel dynamic stochastic skill production model for multiple skills is developed, aligning with empirical evidence. The model can explain the “fade-out” and recovery of measures of learning through the operation of a controlled stochastic process.

11. Armin Falk, Fabian Kosse, and Pia Pinger

[Mentoring and Schooling Decisions: Causal Evidence](#)

[Journal of Political Economy, January 2026](#)

Inequality of opportunity occurs when children of equal academic performance are sent to different-quality schools because their parents differ in socioeconomic status. We demonstrate that children from low-socioeconomic status (SES)

families are significantly less likely to enter the academic track, even after conditioning on prior school performance. We then provide causal evidence that a low-intensity mentoring program can improve the education outcomes of low-SES children and reduce inequality of opportunity. Low-SES children randomly assigned to mentors for 1 year are 20% more likely to enter a high-track program. Mentorship affects both parents and children and has positive long-term implications for children's educational trajectories. The effects are enduring and scalable.

12. Alexander W. Cappelen, Gary Charness, Mathias Ekström, Uri Gneezy, and Bertil Tungodden

[Exercise Improves Academic Performance](#)

[Journal of Political Economy January 2026](#)

In a randomized controlled trial, we test whether removal of a barrier to exercise can improve academic performance. We find strong support for this hypothesis: University students who were provided with a free gym card exercised more and had a significant improvement in academic performance. The treated students were less likely to drop out of classes and to fail at the exam. We provide evidence showing that exercise caused a healthier lifestyle and increased perceived self-control, which ultimately improved academic performance. The study demonstrates that removing barriers to physical activity can be an important tool for improving educational achievements.

13. Camille Terrier, Parag A. Pathak and Kevin Ren

[From Immediate Acceptance to Deferred Acceptance: Effects on School Admissions and Achievement in England](#)

[American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026](#)

Countries and cities around the world increasingly rely on centralized systems for student placement. Two algorithms, deferred acceptance (DA) and immediate

acceptance (IA), are widespread. We investigate the effects of the national ban of IA in England. Before the ban, 49 local authorities used DA and 16 used IA; all switched to DA afterward. We find that the elimination of IA reduces measures of school quality for low-SES students more than high-SES students. This effect is primarily driven by a decrease in low-SES admissions at selective schools. Our findings point to an unintended consequence of the IA to DA transition.

ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY

14. Vipindas P and Seetha Kakkoth

[Indigenous People and Changing Human–Wildlife Relations in the Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary](#)

[EPW, Vol. 61, Issue No. 2, 10 January 2026](#)

Changing human–wildlife interaction is a growing global concern. The implications are severe and include life threats to both humans and wildlife, loss of income, crop raiding, property damage, loss of peace of mind, and reduced community support in conservation efforts. The experiences and perceptions of different indigenous/tribal communities living in the Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary towards changing human–wildlife interactions are examined. The findings show that the experiences of human–wildlife interaction and conflict differ from one community to another and vary across the study areas. Community-specific, livelihood-focused, micro-level mitigation measures are suggested to derive sustainable solutions for mitigating human–wildlife conflicts.

15. Ravi Bhushan, Lavanya Suresh, Manik Gupta and Timothy Clune

[Air Pollution in India A Crisis of Metropolitan Planning and Governance](#)

[EPW, Vol. 61, Issue No. 3, 17 January 2026](#)

The air pollution in Indian cities is the structural outcome of speculative metropolitan expansion. Drawing on remote-sensing evidence from the

Hyderabad Metropolitan Region, the article shows how the state's pursuit of real-estate-driven growth, infrastructure-led expansion, and the relocation of polluting industries to the periphery is leading to the creation of new hotspots of air pollution. Ironically, the same middle-class homeowners who demanded infrastructure-intensive, gated urbanism now find themselves exposed to the environmental consequences of the model they endorsed.

16. Mahesh Rangarajan

[Political Ecospatiality: Livelihood, Environment, and Subaltern Struggles by K Ravi Raman, Cambridge University Press, 2024; pp 250, ₹1,195 \(hardcover\).](#)

[EPW, Vol. 61, Issue No. 3, 17 January 2026](#)

Delivering a lecture in New Delhi in 2013, Gopal Guru had stressed the immediacy of the Dalit question and of viewing the hierarchy of caste as integral, not incidental, to major environmental concerns. The former could not be postponed and had to be taken up, not pushed to the margins or for the future. The search for equality with other organisms or of landscapes and of ensuring that habitations that were liveable, habitable, protected from hazards and workplaces that were safe was important (Guru 2013). Mukul Sharma's work has successfully highlighted the various forms of caste blindness in the environment. In particular, he singled out the ways in which studies by scholars, such as those in history, politics and sociology, sidelined the Dalit and caste question in studies of environmental policy or protest. This remained so much of the period since 1977, unlike questions of disparities of town and country, of gender, class and even those pertaining to the Scheduled Tribes (STs) (Sharma 2017).

17. Giacomo Benati, Carmine Guerriero

[Climate shocks, democratization and \(a culture of\) cooperation](#)

[Economica January 2026](#)

While the direct economic effects of adverse climate shocks are well known, their indirect institutional impact is still poorly understood. To clarify this, we test the

idea that adverse climate shocks push time-inconsistent elites to enact inclusive political institutions, and non-elites to embrace strong norms of cooperation. While democratization transfers to non-elites the power to design fiscal policies and thus assures them that they will enjoy a sufficient part of the returns on investing in farming innovations with elites, cultural accumulation delivers an intrinsic return on cooperation allowing the non-elites' credible commitment to investment. Consistent with these predictions, data on a panel of 38 most agricultural countries observed over 1960–2018 imply that the severity of droughts has both a negative and direct effect on agricultural output, and a positive and indirect institutional impact. The latter can be decomposed in a persistent rise in the inclusiveness of the political process, which in turn shifts the allocation of the tax revenues from military to public health service expenditures, and the horizontal, oblique and vertical transmission of norms of trust and respect. Only a culture of cooperation is, in turn, significantly related, with a one-year lag, to the agricultural output.

FINANCE/BANKING

18. Benedicta Marzinotto

[The heterogeneous impact of European Central Bank asset price surprises on corporate liquidity demand](#)

[Economica, January 2026](#)

Theories of corporate liquidity demand build on the notion that firms accumulate cash to safeguard their activities in the face of costly external finance. Monetary policy provides a clear source of exogenous variation in the external finance premium. Using high-frequency-identified asset price surprises, I estimate the impact of European Central Bank monetary policy shocks on euro area corporate cash holdings over 2001–2019. Old firms with large fixed assets react forcefully to expansionary shocks that result in higher asset prices by reducing demand for precautionary liquidity, and access borrowing to finance tangible investment in a second period. This is because these firms are more exposed to valuation effects and can use more debt when accommodating monetary policy is

transmitted through the revaluation of assets or, relatedly, when the collateral constraints that they face are predominantly asset-based, which appears to be the case for the euro area.

19. Ravindra H Dholakia and Sri Virinchi S Kadiyala

Rethinking the Monetary Policy Framework

EPW, Vol. 61, Issue No. 3, 17 January 2026

Persistent divergence between survey-based consumption estimates and national accounts data has resulted in serious mismeasurement of consumer price index inflation. The current CPI-Combined, which relies on survey-based expenditure weights, covers only about 45% of total private consumption expenditure and is therefore not fully representative. Replacing survey-based weights with private final consumption expenditure weights, as available from the national accounts, would yield a more representative inflation measure and offer several advantages. These include consistency in food and services weights across growth and inflation measurement, closer alignment with practices in other G20 countries, easier adoption of a chain-based index methodology, a closer tracking of headline inflation with core inflation, lower volatility and persistence in headline inflation, and improved suitability for inflation targeting by the Reserve Bank of India.

20. Surjit Bhalla, Surjit Bhalla, Prakash Loungani and Karan Bhasin

Inflation Targeting and Monetary Policy in India

EPW, Vol. 61, Issue No. 3, 17 January 2026

The trend inflation levels in India and other emerging market economies suggest a downward trajectory regardless of the adoption of inflation targeting. Therefore, it is difficult to conclusively establish that the adoption of inflation targeting in India led to a moderation in inflation or anchoring of inflation expectations. There is also some evidence that the anchoring of household expectations predates the

formal adoption of inflation targeting. Similarly, long-term expectations in India have remained firmly anchored since the early 2000s. In terms of growth, the high real interest rates policy followed during the initial years of inflation targeting has adversely affected India's growth dynamics.

21. Jan Eeckhout, Chunyang Fu, Wenjian Li and Xi Weng

[Optimal Taxation and Market Power](#)

[American Economic Review, vol. 116, no. 1, January 2026](#)

Should optimal income taxation change when firms have market power? We analyze how the planner can optimally tax labor income of workers and profits of entrepreneurs. We derive optimal tax rates that depend on markups and identify four distinct components: the Milesian incentive effect, the Pigouvian tax correction of the negative externality of market power, redistribution through altered factor prices, and reallocation of output toward the most productive firms. We quantify the optimal tax for the US economy and provide concrete proposals how to use income taxation to redistribute income while incentivizing production in the presence of market power.

22. Luca Fornaro and Federica Romei

[Monetary Cooperation during Global Inflation Surges](#)

[American Economic Review, vol. 116, no. 1, January 2026](#)

We study optimal monetary policy during times of global scarcity of tradable goods. The optimal monetary response entails a surge in inflation, which helps rebalance production toward the tradable sector. While the inflation costs are fully borne domestically, however, the gains in terms of higher supply of tradable goods partly spill over to the rest of the world. National central banks may thus fall into a coordination trap and implement an excessively tight monetary policy causing an unnecessarily sharp global contraction.

23. Nishant Singh and Bajrangi Lal Gupta

[Predictive Power of Inflation Expectations in India](#)

EPW, Vol. 61, Issue No. 4, 24 January 2026

Inflation expectations influence how societies spend, save, and govern, shaping both economic behaviour and policy effectiveness. This study compares household business inflation expectations in India and their predictive power for actual inflation. Business inflation expectations became more volatile post pandemic, reflecting macroeconomic uncertainty, while household expectations remained stable under the post-flexible inflation targeting regime. Empirical results show that households' expectations better explain consumer price index inflation, whereas business expectations align more with wholesale price index trends. The increasing relevance of households' expectations for core CPI suggests a strengthening of the inflation expectations in recent years.

HEALTH

24. Veena Vijayan A V

[Rethinking Ethics and Informed Consent in Medical Genetics](#)

EPW, Vol. 61, Issue No. 3, 17 January 2026

While informed consent is a central theme in biomedical ethics, there are structural obstacles that compromise its implementation, particularly in genetic research. These include the hierarchical authority of science, unequal relations between researchers and participants, and the linguistic and conceptual barriers that prevent laypersons from fully grasping scientific knowledge. International and national ethical frameworks emphasize autonomy and protection of vulnerable groups, yet often fall short in practice. The discussion extends to the contentious idea of broad consent, which risks undermining participant rights.

25. Charles Gray, Abby Alpert and Neeraj Sood

[Disadvantaging Rivals: Vertical Integration in the Pharmaceutical Market](#)

American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, vol. 18, no. 1, January 2026

The pharmaceutical market has experienced a wave of vertical integration between pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) and insurers in recent years. Using a unique dataset on insurer-PBM contracts, we document increasing vertical integration in Medicare Part D. Next, we evaluate the effects of a large insurer-PBM merger in 2015, assessing the trade-offs of vertical integration—harms to competition on the one hand and improved efficiency on the other. We find premium increases for rival insurers post-merger, consistent with vertically integrated PBMs raising costs through input foreclosure. We find no evidence of benefits to consumers of the merged firm from lower premiums.

26. Steffen Andersen, Elin Colmsjö, Gianpaolo Parise and Kim Peijnenburg

[Breaking Bad: How Health Shocks Prompt Crime](#)

American Economic Journal: Applied Economics vol. 18, no. 1,
January 2026

Exploiting plausibly exogenous variations in the timing of cancer diagnoses, we establish that health shocks elicit a large and persistent increase in the probability of committing a crime. This effect materializes in a substantial rise in both first crimes and re-offenses. We uncover evidence for two mechanisms. First, an economic motive leads individuals to compensate the loss of legal revenues with illegal earnings. Second, cancer patients face lower expected cost of punishment through a lower survival probability. Welfare programs that alleviate the economic repercussions of health shocks are effective at mitigating the ensuing negative externality on society.

27. Seth Freedman, Daniel W. Sacks, Kosali Simon and Coady Wing

[Direct and Indirect Effects of Vaccines: Evidence from COVID-19](#)

American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, vol. 18, no. 1,
January 2026

We estimate direct and indirect vaccine effectiveness and assess how far the infection-reducing externality extends from the vaccinated, a key input to policy decisions. Our empirical strategy uses nearly universal microdata from a single state and relies on the six-month delay between 12- and 11-year-old COVID vaccine eligibility. Vaccination reduces cases by 80 percent, the direct effect. This protection spills over to close contacts, producing a household-level indirect effect about three-fourths as large as the direct effect. However, indirect effects do not extend to schoolmates. Our results highlight vaccine reach as important to consider when designing policy for infectious disease.

LAW AND SOCIETY

28. Varghese Daigy, Boddu Srujana

[Caste and Care Work](#)

[EPW, Vol. 61, Issue No. 2, 10 January 2026](#)

Care work is often categorized as a gendered issue, overlooking the intricate role of caste and its hierarchies. Existing dominant methodologies, such as time-use surveys, fail to capture the caste-based stratification of care work, particularly the unpaid and underpaid labour carried out by lower-caste women. These surveys rely on rigid classifications that obscure the blurred boundaries between labour and care for marginalised women, thereby reinforcing epistemic gaps in policy discourse. A caste-sensitive approach to time-use research, integrating qualitative methods like participatory time-use studies and caste-disaggregated data, is advocated.

29. Ahmed Shabin KK

[Law Reads Literature](#)

[EPW, Vol. 61, Issue No. 3, 17 January 2026](#)

[The Perumal Murugan Case](#)

The sudden discontinuation of the JCB Prize for Literature, sponsored by J C Bamford Excavators in 2025, reignited questions about the politics of literary recognition and the fragility of platforms supporting Indian-language writing. Tamil author Perumal Murugan, the 2023 JCB winner, had himself been at the

centre of a major literary controversy a decade earlier, when his novel faced public backlash and calls for censorship. This article revisits that episode, not merely as a case of literary suppression but as a moment when the judiciary, specifically the Madras High Court, intervened with an act of literary reading.

30. Shivika Goyal, Vandana Sharma and Sharanjit

[Balancing Experience and Access: Reassessing Supreme Court's Three-year Practice Mandate](#)

[EPW, Vol. 61, Issue No. 4, 24 January 2026](#)

The Supreme Court's 2025 ruling mandating a minimum of three years of legal practice for eligibility in the Subordinate Judicial Services examination has reignited debates on the structure and accessibility of judicial recruitment in India. While the Court aims to enhance judicial competence through practical exposure, the ruling disproportionately affects first-generation lawyers, women, and students from marginalized and rural backgrounds. The article calls for alternative models, such as paid internships, structured training, and regularized exams, that balance professional maturity with inclusivity in the recruitment of judicial officers.

31. Lakshita Choudhary

[The 'Failure' of Marriage or the Success of Autonomy? Rethinking Divorce beyond Stigma](#)

[EPW, Vol. 61, Issue No. 4, 24 January 2026](#)

Divorce in India continues to be read primarily as a sign of moral decline and the “failure” of marriage. This article advances the opposite claim: the growing visibility of divorce is a marker of autonomy, especially for women resisting

coercive conjugality. It reinterprets divorce not as a social disorder but as a legitimate pathway out of unequal marriages. The insight, therefore, argues for reforms that ensure predictability, security, and dignity in marital dissolution. By placing autonomy at the heart of family law, it urges a new understanding of marriage founded on reciprocity and care, rather than endurance as the sole measure of its worth.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

32. Sabyasachi Saha, Syed Arslan Ali and Kanishk Rohilla

[Technology and Employment: Opportunities of Industrialization and Self-reliance in India](#)

[EPW, Vol. 61, Issue No. 1, 03 January 2026](#)

India's persistent import dependence has long been a structural challenge, and this trend is very much evident in the high-technology industry, which remains highly vulnerable and yet holds the key to industrial value addition, technological upgrading and commensurate employment generation. In order to develop a comprehensive understanding of India's current and prospective trajectory in the high-tech sector, this paper examines the evolving patterns of trade-tech interconnectedness for India. Industrial policies need to be better informed for employment creation in high-tech industries and should be designed to close the technology gaps.

33. Philipp Ager, Marc Goñi and Kjell G. Salvanes

[Gender-Biased Technological Change: Milking Machines and the Exodus of Women from Farming](#)

[American Economic Review, vol. 116, no. 1, January 2026](#)

This paper studies how gender-biased technological change in agriculture affected women's work in twentieth-century Norway. In the 1950s, dairy farms began widely adopting milking machines to replace milking cows by hand, a task

typically performed by young women. We show that the machines pushed rural young women in dairy-intensive areas out of farming. The displaced women moved to cities where they acquired more education and found better-paying, skilled employment. Our results suggest that the adoption of milking machines broke up allocative inefficiencies associated with moving costs across sectors, which improved the economic status of women relative to men.

34. Jan Eeckhout, Christoph Hedtrich and Roberto Pinheiro

IT and Urban Polarization

American Economic Journal: Macroeconomics, vol. 18, no. 1, January 2026

We show that differential IT investment across cities has been a key driver of job and wage polarization since the 1990s. Using a novel dataset, we establish two stylized facts: IT investment is highest in firms in large and expensive cities, and the decline in routine cognitive occupations is most prevalent in large and expensive cities. We propose and estimate a model and find that the fall in IT prices helps explain the wage gap between routine and nonroutine cognitive jobs, as well as the shift in employment away from routine cognitive toward nonroutine cognitive jobs.

RURAL AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

35. Aejaz Ahmad Wani and Ekta Shaikh

Rethinking the Governance of Begging in India: Integrating Ethics, Law, and Policy

EPW, Vol. 61, Issue No. 2, 10 January 2026

The National Human Rights Commission issued an advisory in 2024 for the protection and rehabilitation of impoverished, uneducated children, women, and differently abled individuals engaged in begging. The advisory reasonably recognises begging as a product of systemic failure of social institutions, rather than merely a socio-economic problem, and proposes a road map for a statewide entitlement-based policy. This article argues that the proposed policy can be effective only if it integrates ethical, legal and policy imperatives in formulating a context-sensitive and rights-compliant framework.