

PREFACE TO THE EDITION

The forthcoming issue of the **Journal of Economic Insights and Research (JEIR)** brings together a collection of rigorously researched and policy-relevant studies that address some of the most pressing economic transformations of our time. Spanning themes of technological disruption, financial systems, climate policy, monetary innovation, and labor market restructuring, this issue reflects the dynamic and interconnected nature of contemporary global economies.

A central theme emerging from this volume is the profound restructuring of labor markets under technological change. The article on artificial intelligence and labor market transformation provides a nuanced, cross-country empirical assessment of AI adoption across OECD economies. By examining employment shifts, wage inequality, and the mediating role of active labor market policies, the study advances the understanding of skill-biased technological change in the era of generative AI. It highlights both productivity gains and distributional tensions, underscoring the necessity of coordinated policy responses in education, social protection, and workforce development.

Complementing this technological lens, the issue interrogates long-standing development assumptions through a critical examination of financial inclusion. Challenging orthodox views that equate financial access with poverty alleviation, the study on the “debt trap paradox” presents robust panel evidence suggesting that rapid formal inclusion absent regulatory safeguards may intensify household debt distress in vulnerable economies. By identifying structural mechanisms such as unregulated digital lending and the erosion of informal risk-sharing systems, the article calls for a reorientation toward regulation-first and capability-enhancing frameworks.

Environmental sustainability and macroeconomic performance are addressed through a comprehensive comparative analysis of carbon pricing mechanisms. By evaluating emissions trading systems and carbon taxes across multiple jurisdictions, the study demonstrates that meaningful emissions reductions can coexist with stable economic growth. Its emphasis on revenue recycling mechanisms and distributional outcomes offers timely insights for policymakers navigating climate commitments while safeguarding competitiveness and employment.

Monetary innovation forms another critical dimension of this issue. The investigation into Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDCs) explores their implications for monetary policy transmission, financial inclusion, and financial stability. Drawing on data from pilot programs and early implementations, the study reveals measurable improvements in interest rate pass-through and inclusion outcomes, while cautioning against potential disintermediation risks. The findings reinforce the importance of thoughtful design in balancing efficiency, inclusion, and systemic resilience.

Finally, the issue examines the expansion of platform-mediated gig work and its implications for employment relations. By documenting growth patterns, compensation structures, and the effects of worker classification reforms, the study illuminates the dual character of the gig economy simultaneously a site of flexibility and innovation, and a locus of social protection gaps and income volatility. The analysis contributes meaningfully to ongoing debates on labor regulation and the future of work.

Collectively, the contributions in this issue exemplify methodological rigor, comparative breadth, and policy engagement. They challenge prevailing assumptions, illuminate structural trade-offs, and offer evidence-based pathways for inclusive and sustainable economic governance. As economies confront accelerating technological change, environmental imperatives, and evolving labor relations, the scholarship presented here aims to inform both academic discourse and pragmatic policymaking.

We extend our sincere appreciation to the authors, reviewers, and editorial board members whose dedication ensures the continued intellectual vitality of *JEIR*. We trust that this issue will stimulate critical reflection and further research across the diverse fields of economic inquiry

Dr Sinitha Xavier
Chief editor

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