

[Back to Article](#)[Click to Print](#)

Thursday, Mar. 17, 2011

Your Next Job: Made in India or China

By Michael Schuman

There is a chance, and maybe even a good one, that you'll walk into work one Monday morning and find out your job is being moved to China or India. Millions have already seen that happen, from shop-floor machinists to IT specialists, in places as disparate as Italy, the U.S. and South Korea. China is a manufacturing machine, charging into the global market for everything from cars to solar panels. India's highly trained engineers are outdueling Stanford grads for jobs in R&D, software development and other sectors that are supposed to be the West's economic salvation. The harsh realities of the globalization of labor have left much of the world's workforce feeling despondent. Everyone in places like London and Los Angeles is competing with smart applicants from Bangalore or Shanghai who are willing to work long hours for a pittance. When there are 2.5 billion people in those two Asian giants combined, how can anyone's job be safe?

Yet there's another way of looking at the great shift of economic power to the East, one that is much less scary and perhaps even inspiring. Those 2.5 billion people are getting richer by the day. This presents an unprecedented opportunity for the workers of the world.

Thirty years ago, the average person in China or India could afford almost nothing beyond basic food and other simple necessities of life. That poverty was a problem for all of us. With so little spending power in the developing world, the global economy was dependent on a handful of wealthy nations, especially the U.S. Today, however, China and India have become a new source of growth for the global economy. Hundreds of millions of Chinese and Indians can now splurge on Sony LCD TVs, Australian steaks and Apple iPhones. Last year, Indians and Chinese bought 19.9 million new passenger vehicles, 70% more than Americans did, according to J.D. Power. This new bonanza for consumer goods increases demand for copper, cotton and other natural resources; the machinery to manufacture those goods; the ships and trucks to transport them; and the people to design and sell them. The result is higher sales and bigger profits for companies such as Boeing and Rio Tinto, as well as more jobs.

We've already seen the benefits. If not for the continued rapid growth in emerging economies like China and India, the world might easily have descended into a real depression in 2008. China lifted all of East

Asia out of the recession by buying capital equipment and consumer goods from Japan, South Korea and the rest of the region. U.S. exports of goods to China reached \$92 billion in 2010, a 32% jump. The influence of China and India will only spread and strengthen as the two countries get wealthier and purchase more from the rest of the world. In Western Australia, the local chamber of minerals and energy believes the industry will create 40,000 jobs over the next three to five years in that state alone, in part because of expanding exports to China.

The newly rich of China and India are also bringing their money right to your doorstep. Their citizens are becoming active tourists, filling hotel rooms and dining out in Times Square and Tokyo's Ginza. According to the U.N. World Tourism Organization, the number of Chinese traveling outside the country rose to 47.7 million in 2009, 54% more than in 2005, and they spent more than French, Japanese or Canadian travelers. Chinese and Indian companies are expanding overseas in a quest for global presence and markets, creating jobs everywhere. Mumbai-based IT giant Tata Consultancy Services — a firm built on outsourcing from the U.S. and Europe — employs more than 13,000 non-Indians, nine times as many as in 2005. Chinese firms invested \$56.5 billion abroad in 2009, up from only \$12.3 billion in 2005, and they tend to hire locally as they invest, to absorb talent and know-how. Not one of the 450 people who work in the U.S. for Chinese appliance maker Haier is from China.

The advance of China and India demands an overhaul in the way we think about jobs. You might just find, for example, that your biggest customers are in Chengdu, not Chicago, or that your boss sits in New Delhi, not New York City. Your paycheck could come in renminbi or rupees instead of in euros or dollars. Sure, in this new economic order, your job may be lost to Chinese or Indian workers. But don't worry. They'll give it right back.

 Click to Print

Find this article at:

http://www.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,2059521_2059693_2059692,00.html

Copyright © 2011 Time Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without permission is prohibited.

[Privacy Policy](#) | [Add TIME Headlines to your Site](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Customer Service](#)