



## **Skill development initiatives for Youth in the context of Indian demographic dividend: An overview of programmes**

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### **Abstract**

India is currently enjoying a 'demographic dividend', which means, it has a higher labour force than the population dependent on it. The population in the age-group of 15-34 (termed as youth) increased from 353 million in 2001 to 430 million in 2011. Current predictions suggest a steady increase in the youth population to 464 million by 2021 and finally a decline to 458 million by 2026. By 2020, the average age in India will be 29 and it is set to become the world's youngest country with 64 percent of its population in the working age group. In Western Europe, the US, South Korea, Japan and even China with aging, this demographic potential offers India and its growing economy an unprecedented edge that economists believe could add a significant 2 per cent to the GDP growth rate. To get more benefits from young population, quality education and skill development programmes have to be given for youth for improve their potentials. The countries like Western Europe, the US, South Korea, Japan and China have grown rich before they have grown old. They invested in education and skills, health, empowerment and employment and ensured youth joined the workforce for getting benefits. The objectives of the paper are to examine the demographic profile of youth in India, to study the education status and to elucidate skill development programmes for youth based on secondary data.

**Keywords:** population, youth, demographic dividend, work force, education, and skill development

### **Introduction**

A country's ability and potential for growth is determined by the size of its youth population. Youth of the Nation are trustees of prosperity. Further, youth force is dynamic in nature. The changing demographic profile of the world has thrown a window of opportunity favouring India. Presently India has the largest youth population in world and will continue to hold so for the next 20 years. The present challenge is to increase human resource potential and to appropriately use to make the driving forces of Indian economy to get returns of demographic dividend. Demographic dividend refers to the growth in an economy that is the resultant effect of a change in the age structure of a country's population. The change in age structure is typically brought on by a decline in fertility and mortality rates. Youth is the most vulnerable segment of the population. Human resource potential of individuals not only gain maximum but also reaches its peak during this period. Youth ones when nourished properly can grow like huge redwood tree but not if not controlled or neglected can erupt like volcano. No country can afford to ignore its youth. As per youth study (2010) <sup>[7]</sup> young people aged 10–24 years in India represent approximately one-third of the country's population. It was the first-ever sub-national, representative study and helped shed light on the realities of India's youth.

The United Nations Population Fund's (UNFPA) State of the World's Population report reveals that developing countries with large youth populations could see their economies soar, provided they invest heavily in young people's education and health and protect their rights. The report titled 'The power of 1.8 billion' stated that 28 per cent of India's population is 10

to 24 year-olds, adding that the youth population is growing fastest in the poorest nations. Global number of youths is highest ever. As the world is home to 1.8 billion young people between the ages of 10 and 24 year, 9 in 10 of the world's young population live in less developed countries. "Never before have there been so many young people. Never again is there likely to be such potential for economic and social progress. As per the United Nations reports (2014) stated that with 356 million in 10-24 year-olds, India has the world's largest youth population despite having a smaller population than China. China is second with 269 million young people, followed by Indonesia (67 million), the U.S. (65 million) and Pakistan (59 million), Nigeria with 57 million, Brazil with 51 million, and Bangladesh with 48 million.

The life experiences and perspectives of young people in the 21st century differ greatly. About 87 per cent of young women and men living in developing countries face challenges brought about by limited and unequal access to resources, healthcare, education, training, and employment as well as economic, social and political opportunities (UNDP Youth Strategy, 2014-17) <sup>[6]</sup>. India is a young nation in the sense that the share of its youth in total population in 2011 stands at 38.4 percent. Therefore, India is also seen to remain younger than many other populous countries. This has provided a great opportunity for country to reap this demographic dividend for making rapid economic growth through participate in workforce. The National Youth Policy (NYP-2014) launched in February 2014 proposes a holistic 'vision' for the youth of India, which is "To empower youth of the country to achieve their full potential, and through them enable India to find its rightful place in the community of

nations". The NYP-2014 has defined 'youth' as persons in the age-group of 15-29 years (Government of India, 2015). For comprehensive development of youth in India, planning, implementation and monitoring of skill based education is required, through which India can get fruitful economic benefits in the form of demographic dividend.

### **Objective**

The objectives of the present paper are

1. To examine the demographic profile of youth in India.
2. To study the education status of Indian and
3. To elucidate skill development programmes for youth at National and International.

### **Methodology**

The present paper is based on secondary on secondary source collected from census of India and other published policy documents of various departments on youth population, education and skill development programmes. In general, youth population refers as 15-34 years (Central Statistics Office, 2017) <sup>[2]</sup>. Skills development defined as is the training and development that the employer provides to his employees in the workplace. Skill Development for youth refers to providing training and development.

### **Demographic profile**

The Census of India (2011) <sup>[1]</sup> shows that India's working age population (15-64 years) is now 63.4 per cent of the total, as against just short of 60 per cent in 2001. The numbers also show that the 'dependency ratio' - the ratio of children (0-14) and the elderly (65-100) to those in the working age-has shrunk further to 0.55. The latest census 2011 data shows that around 41 percent of India's is below the age of 20 years (Census of India, 2011); half the population is in the 20-59 age group and while 9 percent is above the age of 60, even as the western world is ageing, these new numbers show that India's population is still very young. According to the census data, Muslims in the country have the highest proportion of children and teenagers (0-19 Years) among all religions. While 47 percent of the children and teenagers are Muslims, 40 percent are Hindus and 29 percent are Jains. If all communities are taken together, around 41 per cent of the country's population is below 20 years old and nine percent above 60 years, leaving 50 per cent in the intervening 20-59 age group, who can economically participate in labour force. The share of the young population has declined since the previous census in 2001 when it was 45 per cent for the whole country, 44 per cent for Hindus, 52 per cent for Muslims and 35 per cent for Jains.

### **Indian youth in future**

India has the relative advantage at present over other countries in terms of distribution of youth population. As per India's Census, the total youth population increased from 168 million in 1971 to 422 million in 2011. India is seen to remain younger longer than China and Indonesia, the two major countries other than India which determine the demographic features of Asia. As per India's Census 2011, Youth (15-24 years) in India constitutes one-fifth (19.1 per cent) of India's total population. India is expected to have 34.33 per cent share

of youth in total population by 2020. The share reached its maximum of 35.11 per cent in the year 2010. China in contrast is seen to have reached the highest share in the year 1990 at 38.28 per cent and is projected to have the share of youth force shrinking to 27.62 per cent by the year 2020, a situation which Japan has experienced in around 2000 (Central Statistics Office, 2017) <sup>[2]</sup>.

### **Education Status**

Education status is more alarming than the data on religious communities. Census data of 2011 reveals that only 4.5 percent of the population in the country is educated up to the level of graduate or above; while a majority of 32.6 percent population is not even educated upto the primary school level. However, during the decade 2001-11, improvement was observed at middle and above educational levels and decline in percentage share at lower levels (below-primary and primary).The improvements at higher educational levels are indication of educational advancement in the country during the decade 2001-11(Census of India, 2011) <sup>[1]</sup>.

### **Importance of Education**

Youth of the nations are the trustees of prosperity. Youth force is dynamic in nature as most of the skills and orientations are acquired in this age. Youth is a huge reservoir of energy which needs to be tapped and harnessed intelligently for the development of the society. Policy makers all over the world especially in countries like India and China formulate policies in respect of youth to enhance and streamline their energy through emphasizing in skill orientated education. Therefore, In India, skill development programmes is essential for skill development for young population. In this context, Government of India has formulated the National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship in 2015 to provide an umbrella framework to all skilling activities being carried out within the country, and to align these to common standards and link skilling with demand centers.

### **Skills development**

Skills development is the shared responsibility of the key stakeholder's viz. Government, the entire spectrum of corporate sector, community based organizations, those outstanding, highly qualified and dedicated individuals who have been working in the skilling and entrepreneurship space for many years, industry and trade organisations and other stakeholders. The policy links skills development to improved employability and productivity in paving the way 50 forward for inclusive growth in the country. The skill strategy is complemented by specific efforts to promote entrepreneurship in order to create ample opportunities for the skilled workforce. The core objective of the Skills development is to empower the individual, by enabling her/him to realize their full potential through a process of lifelong learning where competencies are accumulated via instruments such as credible certifications, credit accumulation and transfer, etc. As individuals grow, the society and nation also benefit from their productivity and growth.

### **Skill India Programme**

After 'Digital India' and 'Make in India', Government of

India launched new programme, called 'Skill India', is supposed to be a multi-skill programme. The main goal is to create opportunities, space and scope for the development of the talents of the Indian youth and to develop more of those sectors which have already been put under skill development for the last so many years and also to identify new sectors for skill development. The new programme aims at providing training and skill development to 500 million youth of our country by 2020, covering each and every village. Various schemes are also proposed to achieve this objective. Some of Skill developments initiatives for Youth in India are reviewed hereunder:

#### **Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS)**

- Under core programme, apart from others programmes, Skill Up-gradation Training Programme (SUTP) will be given to youth.
- Under Youth and Adolescent Development Programmes, Life Skills Education, Counselling, Career Guidance etc. will be given to youth.
- Under Adolescent Health and Development Project (AHDP), one of objective of the Project is to empower out-of-school adolescents with (i) life skills focused experiential learning on reproductive and sexual health issues in a gender sensitive manner, (ii) linkages with education and skills building institutions for better employability. The Programme is being organised with funding from UNFPA.

#### **Skill Development of Youth**

In India many imitative have been taken through various schemes/ programmes for Skill Development of Youth, which are briefed hereunder.

#### **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)**

The Government has formulated a "Project for Livelihoods in Full Employment under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (Project LIFE-MGNREGA)" in April 2015 aiming at promoting self-reliance and improving the skill base of MGNREGA workers including, thereby, converting them from being asset-less, helpless, unskilled workers dependent on Government support into fully employed entities with enhanced income.

#### **DDU-GKY**

Ministry of Rural Development is undertaking Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojna (DDU-GKY), a placement linked Skill Development Scheme for rural youth under the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM). The DDU-GKY primarily targets skilling of unemployed youth to improve their employability rather than to creak/generate employment per se. DDU-GKY is uniquely focused on rural youth between the ages of 15 and 35 years from poor families. As a part of the Skill India campaign, it plays an instrumental role in supporting the social and economic programs of the government like the Make in India, Digital India, Smart Cities and Start-Up India, Stand-Up India campaigns.

#### **DDAY-NRLM**

National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) was launched by the Ministry of Rural Development (MORD), Government of India in June 2011. In November 2015, the program was renamed Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana (DDAY-NRLM). One of objective of the programme is Skill Training and Placement Support. Skill development and placement support component of NRLM directly targets youth in the age group of 18- 35 years. It aims at achieving a target of skilling 50 lakh rural youth during XII five year plan period. The initiative aims at building the skills of rural youth and places them in relatively high wage employment sectors of the economy. The programme is implemented in partnership with private, community and non-governmental organizations.

#### **Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises**

- Entrepreneurial Skill Development Programme (ESDP):- Comprehensive training programmes are organized to upgrade skills of prospective entrepreneurs, existing workforce and also develop skills of new workers and technicians of MSEs by organising various technical cum skill development training programmes with the basic objectives to provide training for their skill upgradation and to equip them with better and improved technological skills of production. The specific tailor made programmes for the skill development of socially disadvantaged groups (OBC, ST, ST, Minorities and women) are organized in various regions of the states, including the less developed areas.
- Vocational and Educational Training: The Regional Testing Centres, Field Testing Stations and Autonomous bodies like Tool Rooms and Technology Development Centres (TDCs) of the Ministry of Micro Small and Medium Enterprises conduct long term, short term, trade/field-specific and industry-specific tailor-made courses as well as vocational training programmes.

#### **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)**

Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) launched on 15 July, 2015, on the occasion of World Youth Skills Day, is the flagship scheme of the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE). The objective of this Skill Certification Scheme is to enable a large number of Indian youth to take up industry-relevant skill training that will help them in securing a better livelihood. Individuals with prior learning experience or skills will also be assessed and certified under Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). Under this Scheme, Training and Assessment fees are completely paid by the Government. Government has now approved the Scheme for another four years (2016-2020) to impart skilling to 10 million youth of the country

#### **UDAAN**

Udaan is a Special Industry Initiative for Jammu & Kashmir in the nature of partnership between the corporates of India and Ministry of Home Affairs and implemented by National Skill Development Corporation. The programme aims to provide skills training and enhance the employability of

unemployed youth of Jammu & Kashmir. The Scheme covers graduates, post graduates and three year engineering diploma holders.

### **International Initiatives for Youth on Skill Development**

United Nation's initiatives proved some skill development programmes/aspects for Youth, had helped many developing nations to focus on this segment of the population.

### **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**

- Promoting skill building and employment generation for youth, both short and long term;
- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
- Build the skills of young leaders and involve young people and youth-led organizations in policymaking and programming

### **Voices of Youth Connect**

- Voices of Youth Connect aims to provide youth who are excluded from the global debate with the skills and access to knowledge, methods and tools they need to realize their rights and make an impact on their communities.

### **Voices of Youth Maps**

- For youth living in vulnerable communities, Voices of Youth Maps provides a tailored technology platform to help enhance critical thinking skills, create targeted maps and facilitate communication about their living conditions.

### **United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)**

- The UNAIDS Youth Programme is guided by the UNAIDS Agenda for Social Action in the AIDS Response, which builds on previous work. It has four main objectives: Strengthening young people's leadership skills and ability to operate in a framework that advances human rights and gender equality;

### **UNESCO**

UNESCO will work with Member States and youth development actors, including youth organisations, young researchers, teachers and trainers, to contribute to building capacities and improving the educational and 72 learning environment for youth to acquire skills and competencies for the transition to adulthood.

### **Special Initiatives on Youth Education**

Education comes first among the 15 priorities identified by the World Programme of Action for Youth. In doing so, they highlighted the need for 'improving the level of basic education, skill training and literacy among all youth, including young women and youth in distressed circumstances'.

### **Conclusion**

The energy and passion of the youth if utilised properly, can bring huge demographic dividend positive change to the society and progress to the nation. Youth are the creative digital innovators in their communities and participate as active citizens, eager to positively contribute to sustainable development. Therefore, this section of the population need to

be harnessed motivated, skilled and streamlined properly to bring rapid socio-economic progress for a country, thereby prolific changes in cultural aspects. This can achieved through implementing the youth-targeted programs and policies like quality education by appropriate skill development programmes that are existing at National and International level as per the drive of youth within religious as well as cultural context and needs of the nation.

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