



# POPULATION GROWTH - A BOON OR BANE: AN ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

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# **POPULATION GROWTH - A BOON OR BANE: AN ECONOMIC OUTLOOK**

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## DYNAMICS AND CHALLENGES OF YOUTH POPULATION

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### Abstract

*This paper provides vital insights into the challenges facing youth .The main objective of this paper is to encourage discussion and further research for the present and future challenges in respect to youth in India. India has one of the highest adolescent (253 million) and youth populations in the globe. The Census of India (2011) has highlighted the profile and status of the adolescent and youth population, which comprises a vital segment of the total population of India. Socio-political, economic and demographic developments rely on them. The transition*

*from education and training to economic activity marks a crucial phase in the lives of youth, who are the operative workforce of the country .India's youth is a very big asset with full of energy and talent. Sadly, though, many of them don't have the right motivation or direction. Today's youth want freedom and independence. They need guidance to reach their unrealized goals. At the same time, they want to learn from their own experiments. Their path is not easy. Here are the challenges faced by the Indian youth today.*

**Keywords:** World population, Youth Population, asset, challenges, workforce, working age, and behaviour.

### Introduction

Demographic change in India is opening up new economic opportunities. As in many countries, declining infant and child mortality helped to spark lower fertility, effectively resulting in a temporary baby boom. As this cohort moves into working ages, India finds itself with a potentially higher share of workers as compared with dependents. If working-age people can be productively employed, India's economic growth stands to accelerate. Theoretical and empirical literature on the effect of demographics on labor supply, savings, and economic growth underpins this effort to understand and forecast economic growth in India. Policy choices can potentiate India's realization of economic benefits stemming from demographic change. Failure to take advantage of the opportunities inherent in demographic change can lead to economic stagnation. The report titled 'The power of 1.8 billion', said 28 percent 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.

### Youth Concepts and Definition

India and the World Conventionally, period from adolescence to middle age is termed as youth. Age constitute the determining characteristics in the definition of Youth by various agencies. UN adopted the age

group 15 to 24 for defining youth. The National Youth Policy initially (in 2003) defined the youth as in the age group 13-35. However, National Youth Policy, 2014 modified it and defined 'youth' as persons in the age group of 15-29 years. In the present report, we have adopted 15-34 years as youth as adopted in the earlier report in order to show trend and changes over long period of time.

According to 'World Population Prospects: The 2015 Revision' Population Database of United Nations Population Division, India has the world's highest number of 10 to 24-year-olds, with 242 million—despite having a smaller population than China, which has 185 million young people. The regularity and efficiency of census operation in India add rigor to the measurement of Youth in India. The decennial enumeration through Population Census throws up consistent estimates of youth in India. As per India's Census 2011, Youth (15-24 years) in India constitutes one-fifth (19.1%) of India's total population.

India is expected to have 34.33% share of youth in total population by 2020. The share reached its maximum of 35.11% in the year 2010. China in contrast is seen to have reached the highest share in the year 1990 at 38.28% and is projected to have the share of youth force shrinking to 27.62% by the year 2020, a situation which Japan has experienced in around 2000.

It is observed that India has the relative advantage at present over other countries in terms of distribution of youth population. India's advantage in young population is also evident when it is compared with other Asian Countries. 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. These three countries together accounted for 68 % of population of Asia in the year 2010 and the share of Asia itself is about 60% in world population.

India is the second most populated country in the world with nearly a fifth of the world's population. According to the 2017 revision of the World Population Prospects, the population stood at 1,324,171,354. India has more than 50% of its population below the age of 25 and more than 65% below the age of 35. It is expected that, in 2020, the average age of an Indian will be 29 years, compared to 37 for China and 48 for Japan; and, by 2030, India's dependency ratio should be just over 0.4 total dependency ratio: 52.2 youth dependency ratio: 43.6 elderly dependency ratio: 8.6 and potential support ratio: 11.7.

Young people are the innovators, creators, builders and leaders of the future. But they can transform the future only if they have skills, health, decision-making, and real choices in life. Today's record 1.8 billion young people present an enormous opportunity to transform the future, UNFPA Executive Director Babatunde Osotimehim said. The potential economic gains would be realised through a "demographic dividend", which can occur when a country's working age population is larger than the population that is dependent. In order to maximise the dividend, countries must ensure their young working-age populations are equipped to seize opportunities for jobs and other income-earning possibilities, the UN agency said.

India's youth is full of energy and talent. Sadly, though, many of them don't have the right motivation or direction. Today's youth want freedom and independence. They need guidance to reach their unrealized goals. At the same time, they want to learn from their own experiments. Their path is not easy. Here are the top ten challenges faced by the Indian youth today. Modern day youth of India lives in the most interesting phase of the history. As the Indian economy went globalized and the internet is already an integral part of our lives, we have fairer chances of making it big than any of the previous generations. The youth is considered to be the best asset of any country and investment in the human resource promises flabbergasting returns. However, if the people of India to develop the citizens for a better nation tomorrow, they supposed to not only develop their talent but also recognize and counter the challenges Indian youth is facing in present day.

## Challenges that are Faced by the Young Brigade of Mother India

### Peer Pressure

Blame it on the way Indian societies are crafted or any other possible factor, peer pressure is one of the biggest challenges faced by youngsters. The generation gap has widened to an extent that the views of the people of two generations repel each other. The varying interest of the young adults and high expectations of the parents and relatives march the spirit of growth as a whole. This acts as a check on the enthusiasm of young mind leading to waste of the time and resource. The elders need to understand that a little space and trust shown in them will open the doors of the opportunities for the youngsters. With the introduction of smart electronic devices such as mobiles, internet accesses, and various harmful TV serials prevent the youth to understand their parents care. Exposure to unhealthy food habit and psychological behavior lead them into unhealthy life practices, Elders are experience covered assets there is no harm in learning from their experiences and the wisdom.

### Drugs and Alcohol

The drugs and the alcohol are other challenges that are faced by the young Indians due to absence of exposure in to ethical and moral values from the families and educational institutions. Failure, success or broken, drugs are taken as an easy escape from the life and the struggles related to it. Be it in the name of the success party or to overcome the failure, drugs are seen as a mandatory component of any party. Failing in a relationship or the end semester success parties, getting placed in the dream company or missing the entrance by a whisker; sadly, all the answers are searched in the lap of alcohol and weed.

Youngsters need to understand that life is not always a rollercoaster ride. If people of India plot a graph of same; it is a setup of highs and lows with steep curves. This does not mean that the body has to be handed over to be ruined by unrequired products. In the name of the country and their body, India need to overcome this challenge!

### Cost of Education

It is true that the youth brigade aims to conquer the world and make India a superpower. The only way to make it happen is the education. All could see that the institutes today, privatization has increased the effective cost of education. Costly higher education in the private institutes and lack of basic amenities in the government or the government aided educational groups has proven to be a big headache for our young people. The government need to raise the standard of the education and the provide all the resources for the basic learning. Apart from this, a check must be kept on the private educational institutions in the financial terms.

The positive changes to the political crisis and the economic depression is that we have got the right people in the power now. The situations are ought to improve! We are just required to give a little time to let our government deliver the results of the steps that have been taken.

The problems faced by the modern youth are not only social and economical but also psycho motive. Compounded with a lonely state of life, the urban youth have remained immune to the profundity of spiritual heritage of our motherland, its mysticism and its age-old rich heritage. Fed on scientific data and attuned to economic, political and social theories, the youth find themselves rudderless and helpless when caught in the tempests of some personal crisis or jolted by some inexplicable tragedy.

The scoring bosses, family liabilities, lack of recreational activities or housing problems the youth endure the ever-growing list of problems to establish their position in the society. Even though the ever-growing list of enigmas for youth may differ across the globe, but the crux of the matter is that such an indispensable part of the society is reeling under the stress of a myriad of problems.

All said and done modern youth, particularly Indian youth, can definitely contribute towards a big push to the all round development and harnessing of human resources to enhance the rate of growth and development of our nation. We definitely have it in us to shoulder the responsibility of carrying forward the rich legacy of our nation in order to establish ourselves in the world as a developed nation.

### **Stressors in the Youth**

Role and Value Conflicts India has moved from the traditional stable society, mostly agrarian, to a highly developed, industrial and space society. The traditional joint cohesive family has changed to a micro or nuclear and in cohesive family. There is a change from rural to urban living. In such a society, where the youth came from various strata of the society, with diverse cultures, religions, economic status, language and life styles, the youth experience difficulty in adaptation to the changing roles and value systems. This results in alienation, withdrawal, interpersonal relationship difficulties, depression and even suicidal behaviours. The problem gets aggravated when the parents come from different religions and cultures and expect their children to be mature and develop their own value systems and roles without appropriately guiding them. What are the core value systems of the Indian Culture? Who are the role models in India in different spheres of life?

### **Pressures for Performance in Schools and Colleges**

With growth in the youth population and limited opportunities for admission in schools and colleges, and specifically in professional courses, the youth are under great pressure to perform. The previous academic standards of first class and second class are hardly adequate in modern India. The parents, right from the nursery level, make higher demands on their children to study hard and get good marks or ranks without considering their children hidden talents and interests. This attitude may rise depressions in their mind and affect their further growth. The admission fees at various levels, both in public and private institutions have increased considerably which makes a heavy economic burden to the parents. Having made such payments, the parents create guilt feelings in the children as "bad boys", "bad girls", and, "irresponsible children". Such demands from the parents and the society serve as stresses upon the youth. India has maximum number of rich people in the world. Aspiration levels of the youth have increased. What is success? What is the process of achieving success?

### **Career Decision and Unemployment**

Unemployment in all sections in India is continuously increasing, particularly in the higher educated groups. The inflation rate is also increasing. To cope up with the economic demands of life, the youth experience a conflict between economic survival in a competitive society vis-a-vis pursuit of inner human interests and services to the society. A high percentage of youth, after graduation at Bachelor's level or at post-graduation levels in engineering, medicine, law, nursing, and other disciplines remain unemployed or are under-employed and under-paid. It has been observed that one year of unemployment reduces the life expectancy by five years. Hypertension, cardiac problems, psychoneurosis, depression, suicide are rising among youth as also other behaviours including joining anti-social groups such as terrorists, naxalites etc.



Alcoholism, drug addiction, smoking, and rash driving behaviours have increased. These behaviours are to take revenge against the society which has made the youth develop low self-esteem due to unemployment or not being able to be a productive member of the society. The suicide rate in the high school going children has been increasing steadily. It is estimated that 67.2% of the youth are unemployed. As compared with the general population, incidence of psychiatric problems is much higher among youth (12- 15% as compared with 5% among general population): the youth are under great pressure to make a success in life, to prove themselves to their parents and the society, and yet the opportunities are limited.

### **Emotional and Sexual Adjustment**

Youth is a period of life which is heightened in its emotional aspects. The sexual drive is highest at this time of life, which the youth need to be able to control and sublimate through socially approvable behaviour. This is a period where right interaction with the opposite sex is learned. It has been estimated that reproductive health problems are steeply rising - teenage marriage and pregnancy, teenage pregnancy outside marriage, sexually transmitted diseases (2/3rd of STD problem is estimated to be affecting the youth); AIDS is reported to be a critical problem among the youth in major metropolitan cities and drug addicts; high rates of anemia in female adolescents after menarche. Accidents are also steeply rising - (about 15 to 20,000 accident deaths and 15-20,000 permanent handicaps in youth every year which is projected to increase to 30,000 deaths and an equal number of handicaps every year by 2000); suicide (15-20,000 suicidal deaths every year by youth and 15-20 lakh attempted suicides); smoking, alcohol and drug abuse (10% of male non-student youth were estimated to be smokers). The youth do not know where to go and seek medical and counseling help for their reproductive health problems.

### **Coping with Pressures of Living**

The youth today is face with much greater pressures of coping with living as compared with their parents. In most cases they have to move away from their parents to urban cities, some of them even settling in foreign countries. Housing, transport, medical services, number of children, care of the children, education of the children are some of the issues facing the youth before marriage. Lack of social/ familial support and guidance lays great personal responsibility on the youth to evolve their own life styles to successfully adapt to the society, keeping in view the social and family norms and expectations. Many a youth do not wish to conform to the social and familial norms and they wish to live in the society with unconventional value systems such as remaining single; living with opposite sex without marriage; marrying someone of the different religious, cultural, and social background; deciding not to have any children or having one or two children; both the husband and the wife working outside the house and leaving the children with the 'baby-sitters'; husband and wife working and living in different cities, etc. They are not in a position of understanding family welfare is much better than the accumulating of personal wealth.

### **Suggestions for Coping with Stress**

- These suggestions are at two levels - - (a) at social and familial level, and (b) at individual level.
- For adjustment and health of the youth, it is suggested that technical and skill oriented educational programmes be initiated by the public and private institutions in India. A good pioneering work has been initiated by the Indira Gandhi National Open University which offers skill-oriented short term and long term programmes at very low fees. Similarly many schools in the private sector such as Pardada Pardadi Girls

- Vocational School at Anupshahar, a remote village in Uttar Pradesh are doing pioneering work. This would help minimize unemployment.
- b. Both the society and the individuals should change their value systems towards nature of work, earnings, and productive employment. On the one hand in India, we compare ourselves with the Western countries, yet on the other hand we hardly adopt the good value systems of the Western countries which result in individuals and national productivity. In Western countries, there is dignity in work. Many senior officers, such as university heads, professors and managers drive taxis, work as salesmen, and perform what we consider as low level manual jobs, as labourers to supplement their income. The youth rather than being unemployed, should be trained to develop an attitude to work on any odd job to gain experience or earn while learning. Most of the young people should be encouraged in India to do some part-time work whether manual or otherwise, while still being educated at schools and colleges. Educational institutions may support the students to get into either part time job or self employment through shift system.
  - c. The youth should be encouraged to pursue careers in line with their vocational interests rather than being attracted to those careers which give better status and income. The ultimate factor of job satisfaction, personal fulfillment and creative realization will depend on whether the person has chosen a career which is in line with one's aptitudes, interests and capabilities.
  - d. The schools, colleges and other institutions should have facilities for vocational and emotional counseling, and voluntary organizations can play an important role in offering such counseling services.
  - e. The voluntary organizations can offer counseling services regarding marriage, family planning, drug addiction, alcoholism, STD, AIDS, etc..., Many voluntary and industrial organizations, such as Bharat Petroleum have taken the initiative by producing films regarding drug addiction and adverse effects of alcohol. Such films should be made available to all educational and welfare organizations to show to the youth for creating awareness. The medical and health services should be easily accessible to the youth through public and private hospitals, dispensaries, health posts, and sub-centres in villages.
  - f. The parents should find time to spend with the youth to understand the adjustment problems which the youth might be experiencing and be friends with them, in guiding them with regard to studies, friends, vocational choices, decisions regarding marriage and concerns regarding marital adjustment.
  - g. The youth, at all levels, should be involved in various kinds of programmes by the government and voluntary sectors. This will not only occupy them but will give them rich experience in planning and management of various aspects of life. The Government and the universities could take the lead by chalking out and planning socially constructive mass programmes such as health education for rural health, literacy, etc. with the involvement of the youth.
  - h. Keeping in view the socio-economic conditions of the country, competitions and opportunities available, the youth should set up realistic goals and priorities. Greater stresses are experienced when the goals are unrealistic
  - i. Both in the family and in the educational institutions, the youth should be trained in yoga, meditation, and other techniques to cope with the distress situations.
  - j. The parents should always accept their children, irrespective of the sex and love their children irrespective of their performance in the schools and colleges or in life. Acceptance and love should not be performance-oriented. This would help build self-esteem and feeling of worth whileness

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- k. The youth should be engaged in social services and attempt to do some good to others without expecting any returns. Such an orientation will give feelings of usefulness and long term happiness.
- l. The youth should also be encouraged to develop a feeling of pride in our country irrespective of the social and economic hardships rather than being encouraged or being attracted to greener pastures in foreign countries.

So, let the process of change begin.

### Conclusion

The changing demographic profile of the world has thrown a window of opportunity to India. Currently India has the biggest share of youth population in the world and will continue to hold for the next twenty years. The youth force of the nation is a dynamic in nature as most skills and orientations are acquired in this age. They are the trustees of prosperity in India. Youth is a huge reservoir of energy which need to be tapped and harnessed intelligently for the development of society. The present challenge is to increase the human resource potential and to utilise it optimally to make it the driving force of economy of India. Policy makers all over the world formulate policies in respect of youth to enhance, enrich and streamline their energy through various youth welfare programmes.

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