

Youth and Employment: An Outlook on Challenges of Demographic Dividend

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Abstract : India's youth bulge is now sharpest at the critical 15-24 age group, even as its youngest, and oldest age groups begin to narrow. As the 'single year, age data' for the 2011 Census releases the data on the number of people at each year of age in the population. The data shows that India's working age population (15-64 years) is now 63.4 percent of the total, as against just short of 60 percent in 2001. The numbers also show that the 'dependency ratio' the ratio of children (0-14) and the elderly (65 above) to those in the working age has shrunk further to 0.55. "Even as the western world is in ageing situation, these new numbers show that India's population is still very young". As the fertility falls faster in urban areas, rural India is younger than urban India; while 51.73 percent of rural Indians are under the age of 24 and 45.9 percent of urban Indians are under 24. The percentage of the population under the age of 24 has dropped, but many demographers say that it should not be interpreted as a sign of the youth bulge is shrinking. Rather it is because of "declining fertility, the number of infants and children reduces first, and this is what we see with the number of under age 24. Indeed the figure shows that the proportion of children in the 0-4 and 5-9 age groups has fallen in 2011 compared to 2001. For the first time, the percentage of children in the 10-14 age group has also fallen, as the effect of families reducing the number of children they have begins to be felt. The present paper key issue is to examine that "whether this growing youth bulge has the right skills for the workforce or not". The study seeks to examine the youth population structure and employment distribution among them in India during 2001-2011 in different industrial category. It also tries to analyze the workforce participation rate as main and marginal workers both for male and female workers in rural and urban India by utilizing an abundant source of census data from 2001-2011. Result shows that an unconscionable number of adolescents are working when they should study. In rural areas, large numbers of youths are working as an agricultural labourer. Study shows that most of the youths working are in the 15-19 age groups. In fact, this is the age of entry into higher education, but due to economic compulsion forces them to take up jobs, killing their dreams of higher skills or education. Youths are primarily engaged in low paying irregular jobs which are clearly revealed by census data on marginal workers. That is those who get work for less than six months in a year. Large proportions of youths are involved in the cultivation and household industries works.

Keywords : main, marginal, youth, work

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