

# International Journal of Advance Research in Computer Science and Management Studies

Research Article / Survey Paper / Case Study

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## *Attaining India's Demographic Dividend: A way forward*

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**Abstract:** *In this era of development and transition phase the growing economies of the countries, come across demographic change, known as “Demographic dividend”. The dividends are associated with the population composition of any economy. However, this cannot be achieved without framing proper guidelines for absorbing the potential workforce of the country into productive workforce. While in most of the economies, including India, emphasis is being done on laying proper framework for implementing the policies but still inclusive growth of all the sectors of the economy remains a distant desire. In order to reap full benefits of demographic dividend, the country will have to intensify their focus on health, education and other areas. In this research paper, we will emphasise the factors which are connected with yielding the benefits of demographic dividend and the framework essentially required in India for its development as a whole.*

**Key words:** *Demographic dividend and transition, Population composition*

### I. INTRODUCTION

Policymakers usually focus on short term strategies for the development. However, if the short term strategies work as a bridge for the long run development of any economy, it has a proven track for providing better results. Half a century ago, with the enormous population size of the country, providing basic needs to the entire population seemed to be a near impossible task. Somewhere, along the line, it proved to be a blessing in disguise. The economists discovered a ray of hope. The world was aging, but India was growing younger. There was a “demographic dividend” that the country could anticipate for, and ultimately en- cash.

Simply stated, the demographic dividend is a falling birth rate thus making a change in the age structure. With a falling birth rate, there is a smaller population of young and dependant people and thus with relatively more people in the working age population, a country gets an environment for growth if the right socio economic policies are formulated and implemented. The main criteria for attaining Demographic dividend are that there should be a transition to lower birth rates and child death rates in comparison with high birth and death rates a process referred as “demographic transition<sup>1</sup>”.

India has a relatively young population, and some economists believe that the resultant ‘demographic dividend’ will set India’s path for economic development. An increasing proportion of the population that is of working age will accelerate to reap the fruits of demographic dividend. People of working age are energetic and productive than those who do not fall in the working age group. People of working age help in the accelerated accumulation of capital due to their increased savings resulting from less spending on dependants. Productive growth of the potential workers provides an opportunity for environment to move on the path of socio-economic development. Hence an increase in the working age ratio confers a “demographic dividend.”

As per the Registrar General of India(2001),with a median age of 22.5 years and a dependency ratio of just a little above 0.4, a ‘demographic dividend’ in India is currently underway (Registrar General of India, 2001)<sup>2</sup>.

## II. NEED FOR THE STUDY

Productive jobs are vital for growth. And a good job is the best form of insertion. Most of our population depends on agriculture and the per capita income in agriculture is low. When we look at the graph of per capita income on agriculture of other countries, we have to shrink our population dependency on agriculture in order to substantially increase our per capita incomes in agriculture. Most of our people are working in the unorganised sector getting lower incomes, little health protection, and absolutely no rewards. Hence, if India needs to accelerate its phase of development, it has to create an environment in which there are less people dependant on agriculture, creation of productive jobs in the organised sector, enhancing entrepreneurship, foster investments while improving strategies for increasing the productivity in agriculture. We require more flexible labour markets; literacy especially for women, and a broad attitude about women working; higher rates of female labour force participation; a healthier population; improved infrastructure and globalisation. In short, India needs to foster decades of inclusive growth. Now, the challenge for India is how to reap the benefits of demographic dividend. In this paper the authors have attempted to explain the relationship between demographic dividend and its dependency on the socio economic policy framework being adopted and implemented by Indian government.

## III. OBJECTIVES

To review the demographic trends in India of the past, present and projected

To study the challenges of inclusive growth for attaining demographic dividend

To find out the suggestive measures to ensure maximum mileage that can yield demographic dividend

## IV. RESEARCH METHOD

In this paper, we review demographic trends in India of the past, present and projected and its inclusion in our systems. Our main focus is on the years 2020–2025. We begin by looking at the characteristics of demographic transition- age dependency ratio, data on population growth and its components (births, deaths, and international migration) and the age structure and sex composition of the population. We conclude by discussing the resultants of these demographics. In this paper, we mostly use data from the United States Census Bureau International Data Base (IDB), World Bank. Various secondary sources have also been used.

## V. KEY FINDING : THE DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSITION IN INDIA

### 1. Age dependency ratio (% of working-age population) in India

Age dependency ratio is the ratio of dependents--people younger than 15 or older than 64--to the working-age population--those ages 15-64. If we look at Graph 1 below, we find that the dependency ratio is gradually falling. That states that we are already in the demographic transition phase. Age dependency ratio in India was last measured at 52.36 in 2013, according to the World Bank. Whether India will be able to reap the fruits of demographic dividend will depend on its accepting the challenges in providing and implementing proper policies.

### 2. Population Growth and Its Components

India annual growth rate in the year 2013-14 is 1.27 as per US census bureau 2014. Table 1 very clearly states that India is in the process of demographic transition. If we look at the birth rates, it has drastically reduced to 7.4 from 9.0/1000 population, the death rates have decreased to 7.4 from 9.0 thereby reducing the number of dependants on the working age population.

As per table 2, In India, the gap between births and deaths is narrowing, resulting in slower population growth. Population growth rate has been declining since before 2005 and is expected to do so at about the same rate until at least 2025.

**Birth Rates**

During the 1995–2025 period, the CBR in India is projected to decrease smoothly, from 28.0 per 1,000 to 17.0 per 1,000. The number of births in a country is the product of two variables: the average number of births per woman of childbearing age and the number of women in this age range. If the number of women of childbearing age is increasing, the number of births can increase even if the number of births per woman is falling – a phenomenon known as “population momentum.” We now discuss each of these in turn. The total fertility rate (TFR), the average number of lifetime births per woman (or more precisely, the number of births a woman would have in her lifetime if at each age she experienced the age-specific fertility rates of that year), is a measure of fertility that is not affected by the number of women of childbearing age in the population. The TFR is thus considered a better measure than the CBR for comparing fertility levels between countries or time periods. . The IDB estimates that in 1995 the TFR in India was 3.4 children per woman,. The IDB estimates that the TFR in India will decrease very gradually to “replacement level”—the level needed for population stabilization in the long run (approximately 2.3 children per woman)—by 2025.

**Death Rates**

The CDR is strongly affected by the age composition of a population. India’s crude death rate (CDR) is projected to remain stable at 7 per 1000 from 2014 to 2025.

A better measure for comparing mortality risks or overall health between countries and across time periods is life expectancy at birth (LEB)—the number of years that a person born in a given year can expect to live if the age-specific mortality rates of that year apply throughout that person’s life. LEB has been increasing and is expected to continue to do so through at least 2025. LEB which is currently at 68 will go up to 71 by 2025.

**3. Age-Sex Structure of the Population**

Demographers normally use population pyramids to depict the age-sex structure of a population. For nations with consistent high fertility rates, the pyramids are formed with a wide base with large number of young population and narrower bands near the top representing older population which are near the end of their natural life span. In Graph 2, 3, 4 we show population pyramids for India for the years 2000, 2014, 2025. The Indian age-sex structure in 2000 is a good example of the classic pyramid shape. The pyramid shape of year 2014 has a thicker base than the year 2000. Now, due to fewer births, as we go forward, the base (ages 0–4) of the pyramid for India in 2025 is not as wide as it for 2000, but above age 20 the bars are all much wider than they are now for those age groups<sup>3</sup>.

However, now it is time to bank on India’s demographic dividend. Census data 2011 shows that youth cohort is now sharpest at 15-24 age groups, as its youngest and oldest age groups begin to slender. Now the working age population is 63.4% of the total, as against 60% in 2001. The ratio of dependant people i.e. children (0-14) and the elderly (65-100) to those in the working age — has shrunk further to 0.55. India’s median age has risen to 24 years in 2011 as against 22 years in 2001. Overall, 49.91% of its population is under the age of 24.

The proportion of the population under the age of 24 has dropped by four percentage points due to falling fertility. For the first time, the proportion of children in the 10-14 age groups has also fallen. However the proportion of those in the 15-19 and 20-24 age groups has risen over 2001. Again, the challenge for India is to provide necessary skills to the young workforce<sup>4</sup>.

**VI. ENABLER OF DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDEND IN INDIA**

Economics tells us that capital, land; labour and time have to be used for maximum returns for the creation of investment and economy. These forces multiply when combined produce though their relative value and productivity level of each is very different. For transferring demographic transition into demographic dividend, minimum of seven enablers are a prerequisite:

1. Large-scale and persistent long-term investment in manufacturing. Since manufacturing units are labour intensive, they will generate capital and absorb labour surplus.
2. Large and persistent capital flows into India, creating large capital surplus for operation into manufacturing units, energy and water sustainability.
3. Globalising the manufacturing units, thus earning large and persistent surplus which will help in capital formation for operations in manufacturing.
4. To create jobs in agriculture and deployment of strategies in proper water harvesting and irrigation and arable land.
5. Strong transportation management and developing cold chain infrastructure that will help in storage of agricultural produce and develop food industry.
6. Use of science- and technology to reach global markets with pricing power.
7. Maintenance of internal and external peace, so that there is no wastage of capital and time.

Labour, like capital and land, has to be deployed skilfully. We have to set our priorities if we want to reap the fruits of demographic dividend. Otherwise, it will turn into a burden<sup>5</sup>.

## VII. SOCIAL – ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

### 1. *Ushering Investments by framing proper policies*

The World Bank's India Development Update of October 2013 says that though the recent depression in the global economy has hampered India's macroeconomic environment, the country's growth is still set high. India has to develop further reforms to counterfeit the economic depression through strengthening financial sector, narrowing the infrastructure gap, and reducing fiscal deficit. The country's present disorder—high inflation, current account deficit, fiscal deficit have to be paid attention for sustained inclusive growth. To take advantage of the global market, policies for exports have to be formulated to have a lasting effect as the currencies of many other emerging economies are weakening against the dollar<sup>6</sup>.

### 2. **Poverty Reduction and formation of pro-poor policies**

If we look at the table 3, the poverty rate has been reduced to 22% and India 137 million people have moved out of poverty between 2005 and 2012. Interestingly, a much larger fraction of the decline in poverty is in low-income states, and the poorest 40% are enjoying the benefits of growth. The economic reforms of 1990 have helped GDP growth averaging around 7 percent during 1993/94–2011/12. This has helped halve the poverty headcount rate from 45.3 percent to 21.9 percent. The growth accelerated to 8½ percent during 2004/05–2009/10 after growing at an average rate of 6¼ percent during 1993/94–2003/04. This rapid economic growth has helped in the reduction in poverty. Poverty declined by 1.5 percentage points per year in 2004/05–2009/10 which is double the rate of the preceding decade. India has achieved notable progress in poverty reduction which is evident from the Table 3<sup>7</sup>. However, considerable efforts are yet to be done. To achieve this, considerable efforts are needed on the part of the government to formulate and implement growth strategies. The strategies should identically cover

- managing the income generated through natural resources
- export strategy for agricultural products so that the farmers could earn
- Providing a strong base to sub-regional assimilation to avail economies of scale<sup>8</sup>.

### 3. **Providing IT platform**

Since the 1990s, the information technology industry has boomed in India. However, the other side of the coin is that still these new, technologically advanced sectors form only a tiny island in the ocean in terms of employment. The National

Association of Software and Services Companies (Nasscom) has published a study saying that only 25% of information technology (IT) graduates are employable. This was taken seriously from the All-India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), the government's accreditation agency. As per AICTE, every year, one million engineers and diploma holders are added to the workforce and if Nasscom report is true, that shows that there is a skill gap. According the report, titled As per the "The National Employability Report, Engineering Graduates, Annual Report-2012", India produces more than 500,000 engineers annually, but only 2.68% meet the skill requirements of the IT products sector. The report estimated that nearly 92% of engineering graduates in India lack computer programming and algorithms skills and around 56% lack soft skills and cognitive skills. The challenge for the policymakers is to bridge the gap between education and skill deployment<sup>9</sup>.

#### **4. Employment generation**

Almost half of the Indian population work in agriculture and which is substantially the biggest informal sector in India. Women are deployed as domestic workers. Even educated women in urban areas have difficulties getting employed in the organised sector. The number of 'missing women' in the Indian economy -- women who withdraw from labour force and attend only to household work -- was a staggering 162 million in 2004-05. India's challenge is to build a strong manufacturing sector which generates massive employment. We have to direct our focus on research and development<sup>10</sup>. Though unemployment rate in India decreased to 5.20 percent in 2012 from 6.30 percent in 2011<sup>11</sup>, but still efforts need to be done to increase employment, outside agriculture, especially in the organised and service sector.

#### **5. Generation of Vocational training programmes**

Even though having a huge workforce, India is suffering the crucial shortage of skilled manpower. As per industry analysis, nearly 75 to 80 million jobs will be created in India over the next five years. It is estimated that almost 75 to 90% of all additional employment will require some vocational training. There is a huge demand-supply skill gap in India. About 90% of the jobs in India require skill training, thus there is an underlying requirement of vocational training. It is estimated that only 5% of the youth in India are vocationally trained. At present, institutions that are imparting skill development in the country is 3.1 million per annum against country's target of skilling 500 million people by 2022. A large number of Vocational Training Institutes have outdated syllabus which do not coincide with the current market conditions<sup>12</sup>. To build inclusive India, it is very essential for us to strengthen our work force with capabilities that are essential for them to be market savvy. Sectors have to be identified and holistic training need to be provided to our young force.

#### **6. Integration between Government, Academia and Industry**

There is a lack of integration between the government, academia and industry in India. The curriculum in the education institutes is being taught in the same manner as it was taught decades ago though the methods of business have changed drastically. The strategy of three Es — education, employability and employment have to be taken care off. India's literacy rate is still 74.04%<sup>13</sup>. The largest part of India's schools is of poor quality. Teachers are not skilled enough. There are problems on the quantitative side too. Dropout rates are 40% at the elementary level<sup>14</sup>. Proper enforcement of Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 has to be done.

#### **7. Flexibility in labour Market labour and Product Market in India**

In India, there is a tightly-regulated labour and product markets which has given rise to a large informal sector. Although significant progress has been made in liberalizing product markets in India, still in comparison with other countries, our product and labour markets are tightly regulated. As a result, product market competition remains low. The OECD's product market regulation index (2008) suggests that in comparison with other OECD countries, India's product markets are less competitive. Due to multiplicity of labour laws, labour market rigidities remain high Although the Industrial Disputes Act (IDA) of 1947 is the basis for industrial labour regulations in India, a relaxation of labour market regulations in the will foster higher employment<sup>15</sup>. More firms can enter the organised sector due to increased output and profitability, increasing competition and

lowering the prices of formal goods. This will help in increasing the competitiveness of the economy leading to an increase in exports. A relaxation in product market regulations will accelerate investment and increase in output. All these reforms will stimulate GDP and will be helpful in long run.

#### **8. *Providing Health Care for children and women***

The biggest of all challenges for the policymakers is to keep its more than 1.2 billion population fit and educated. As per World bank estimates, India ranks highest in malnutrition among children Underweight children are highest in India<sup>16</sup>. The health care facilities are not properly implemented. Though we have various health care plans in India but still they are not properly implemented. Proper strategies for healthcare are a must of our policymakers in order to not to turn demographic transition into a demographic catastrophe.

#### **9. *Providing Rural Prosperity in Agriculture***

India is suffering from the dilemma of low crop productivity, high cost of food, low purchasing power, lack of markets, low water productivity, unutilized rain-fed and wastelands. India needs development on these forefronts for attaining its demographic dividend in real sense. Need to build proper strategy on agro-industrial linkages, increasing the crop productivity, increased access to agro industries, providing agricultural credit, having access to advance technology, developing the wastelands, development of bio-mass power and bio fuels. By the improvement in agriculture and agro industries, the government can create bountiful opportunities for both the development of the country and sustained generation of employment<sup>17</sup>.

#### **10. *Prioritizing equitable and pro-poor policies***

Steadfast, well-organized infrastructure is critical to economic and social development for promotion of pro-poor growth. Progressive and technologically advanced management of infrastructure investment, increasing the role of infrastructure in the routines of poor people, development of public private participation model in the rural areas and promoting sector investment, development of cross-sector integration are some of the areas where the government needs to look into so that the poor strata of our society are included in the economic development leading ultimately the achievement of demographic dividend<sup>18</sup>.

#### **11. *Promotion of good governance***

In India, There is a huge difference between the rich and the poor and between the urban areas and rural areas. Also the disparity exists in the use of scarce natural resources between the corporate and the communities. However, India has recognised these issues and has placed the concept of good governance in the 11th Five Year plan. But, at the same time, proper implementation of strategies is required. The successful implementation of good governance nurtures a “development dividend”. Administrative changes and decentralization, transparency in each department, anticorruption strategies, strategic assistance with multilateral organisations and the EU are some of the matters in which the government has to look deliberately to achieve demographic dividend<sup>19</sup>.

#### **12. *Rule of Law***

Rule of Law is connected with poverty reduction, development of human capital, in rendering gender equality, decentralization and economic development is the key element for good governance and peace building. In India, we find that the justice demanding takes a long governmental procedure. Moreover, fairness in application is not essential. People are denied of security. Law and order, fairness in effective application should be on the top priority list of Indian government. Peace in the state and the country develop confidence in the citizens. Effective, timely and impartiality in the justice adds to their confidence. Decisive, strategic and holistic rule of law will help in the development of democratic governance<sup>20</sup>.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

A sizeable part of India's growth velocity since the 1980s can be attributed to demographic change. Looking ahead, the continuing demographic transition will yield a growth dividend of about 2 percent per annum over the next two decades<sup>21</sup>. There is a little empirical evidence between demographic variables and various measures of social, economic development

However, keeping the above factors in mind, in order to reap the benefits of demographic dividend, the policymakers along with the private participation have to move on the path of sustained socio economic development.

**Graph 1-Age dependency ratio (% of working-age population) in India**



Source: WORLD BANK INDICATORS(2014) - INDIA - POPULATION

Note : Population dependency ratio is defined as  $100 - [\text{Population ages 15-64 (\% of total)}]$

**Table 1-Components of Population Growth - Custom Region - India**

Year	Births Per 1,000 Pop	Deaths Per 1,000 Pop	Net No. Of Migrants Per 1,000 Pop	Rate Of Natural Increase (%)	Growth Rate (%)	Pop	Births	Deaths	Net Number Of Migrants	Natural Increase	Population Change
2000	26.0	9.0	-0.1	1.70	1.69	1,006,300,297	26,123,556	9,066,766	-60,378	17,056,790	16,996,412
2014	19.9	7.4	-0.1	1.25	1.25	1,236,344,631	24,590,895	9,087,133	-61,817	15,503,762	15,441,944
2025	17.0	7.3	0.0	0.97	0.97	1,396,046,308	23,718,827	10,191,138	-55,842	13,527,689	13,471,847

Note: The growth rate may not equal the sum of the rate of natural increase and the migration rate due to rounding.

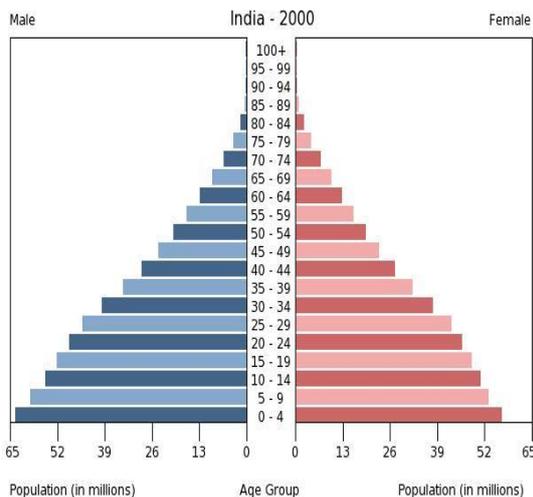
Source: US census bureau 2014

**Table 2: Demographic Indicators**

Demographic Indicators	1995	2005	2014	2015	2025
<b>Population</b>					
Midyear Population(in thousands)	920,585	1,090,973	1,236,345	1,251,696	1,396,046
Growth Rate(percent)	1.9	1.5	1.3	1.2	1.0
<b>Fertility</b>					
Total Fertility Rate(births per woman)	3.4	2.8	2.5	2.5	2.3
Crude Birth Rate(per 1000 population)	28	23	20	20	17
Births(in thousand)	25,970	25,507	24,591	24,471	23,719
<b>Mortality</b>					
Life Expectancy at birth(years)	60	65	68	68	71
Infant Mortality Rate(per 1000 births)	75	58	43	42	30
Under 5 Mortality Rate(per 1000 births)	109	81	59	56	39
Crude death rate (per 1,000 population)	10	8	7	7	7
Deaths(in thousands)	8,819	8,695	9,087	9,162	10,191
<b>Migration</b>					
Net Migration Rate (per 1000 population)	-0	-0	-0	-0	-0
Net number of migrants(in thousands)	-0	-55	-62	-50	-56

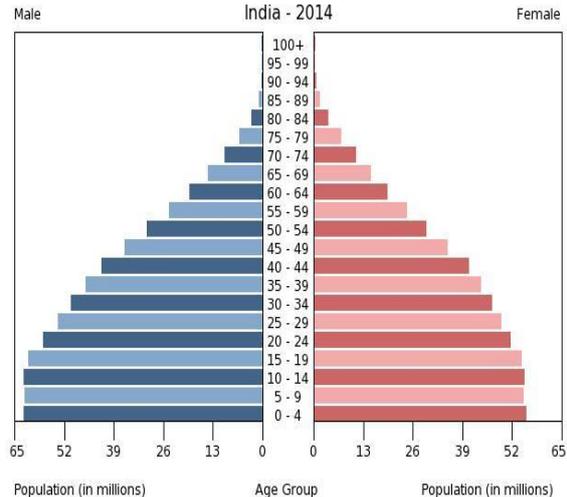
Source: US Census Bureau 2014

**Graph 2 Demographic Pyramid-year 2000**



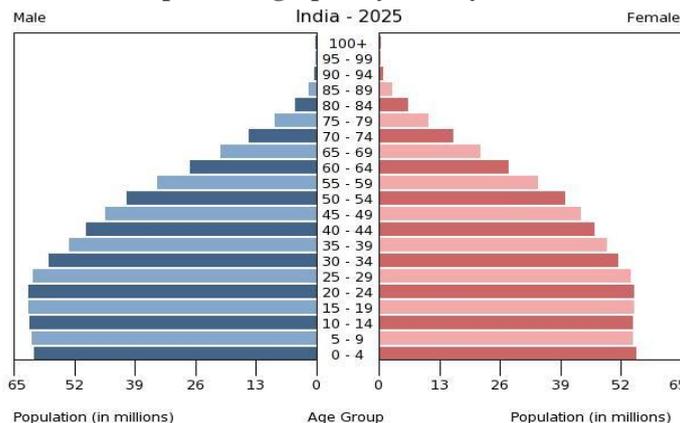
Source: US Census Bureau 2014

**Graph 3 Demographic Pyramid-year 2014**



Source: US Census Bureau 2014

**Graph 4 Demographic Pyramid-year 2025**



Source: US Census Bureau 2014

**Table 3- India: Evolution of Poverty**

		1993/94	2004/05	2009/10	2011/12	Annual Average Decline in Poverty		
						1993/94-2004/05	2004/05-2009/10	2004/05-2011/12
Poverty Headcount Ratio	Rural	50.1	41.8	33.8	25.7	0.8	1.6	3.2
In percent	Urban	31.8	25.7	20.9	13.7	0.6	1.0	2.4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>45.3</b>	<b>37.2</b>	<b>29.8</b>	<b>21.9</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>3.1</b>
Number of Poor	Rural	328.6	325.8	278.2	216.5	0.3	9.5	15.6
In millions	Urban	74.5	81.4	76.5	52.8	-0.6	1.0	4.1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>403.7</b>	<b>407.2</b>	<b>354.7</b>	<b>269.3</b>	<b>-0.3</b>	<b>10.5</b>	<b>19.7</b>

Sources: IMF staff calculations; Press Note on Poverty Estimates, 2011-12, July 2013.

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