

## CHALLENGES FACED BY THE INDIAN DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDEND: UNEMPLOYMENT, POVERTY AND MENTAL HEALTH

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### ABSTRACT

*The research paper attempts to investigate the challenges faced by the Indian demographic dividend. The research corroborates primary research obtained from interviews of two subject matter experts and secondary researches from various papers. The findings of this research indicate that unemployment; poverty and mental health are closely linked challenges, which have adversely impacted the Indian youth's ability to provide itself as a "demographic dividend". Unemployment has led to the economic output to fall, leading to conditions associated with absolute poverty and mental health. The Indian youth is facing both economic and psychological crisis due to the lack of availability of sufficient skill development policies, adequate jobs and educated population. This paper reinforces the need of new skill development policies, increasing awareness of mental health issues and better education institutions to combat these challenges.*

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**Keywords:** *Demographic Dividend, Unemployment, Poverty, Mental Health.*

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### Introduction

Economics has established much of a background for all decisions made by domestic and international firms as well as the government. Countries have long relied on their knowledge of this subject to achieve "economic growth"- a state where economies utilise their resources in the most valuable way (Romer, 2007). Economic growth provides countries with a backbone in the ever-growing international market. The very ability of a nation's government to tackle economic conditions ranks its position in the race of development. Ever since independence, the Indian economic growth has fluctuated greatly (as seen in Figure 1). In the year 1961, the gross domestic product (GDP) of India was 3.731%, and within a decade, the country experienced a fall in its output as the GDP fell to 1.643% (World bank, 2017).

India reached its lowest economic growth rate in the year 1979 (-5.238%) however, the economy recovered in the year 1980 to 6.736% (World bank, 2017). During the mid 80s, the economy experienced growth breaks and acceleration due to changes in the restrictive policies that focused majorly on the external sector of the economy (Panagariya, 2004). By the year 1991, the Indian economy faced yet another downturn in the economic growth to 1.057%. The imposition of new, bolder reforms after this economic downturn led the GDP to peak to 8.846% in the year 1999. The 21st century, however, began with a relatively low growth rate at 3.841% yet, in 2010, the economy reached its highest ever GDP of 10.26% (World bank, 2017). By 2017, the economic structure of India faced significant changes, with the economic growth rate decreased to 6.624% (World bank, 2017).

The following overview of the economic development of the country in terms of total output produced very well represents the economy's position in the international market, and to better analyse the extent to which the growth can be maximized, the government may assess the population structure of the economy.

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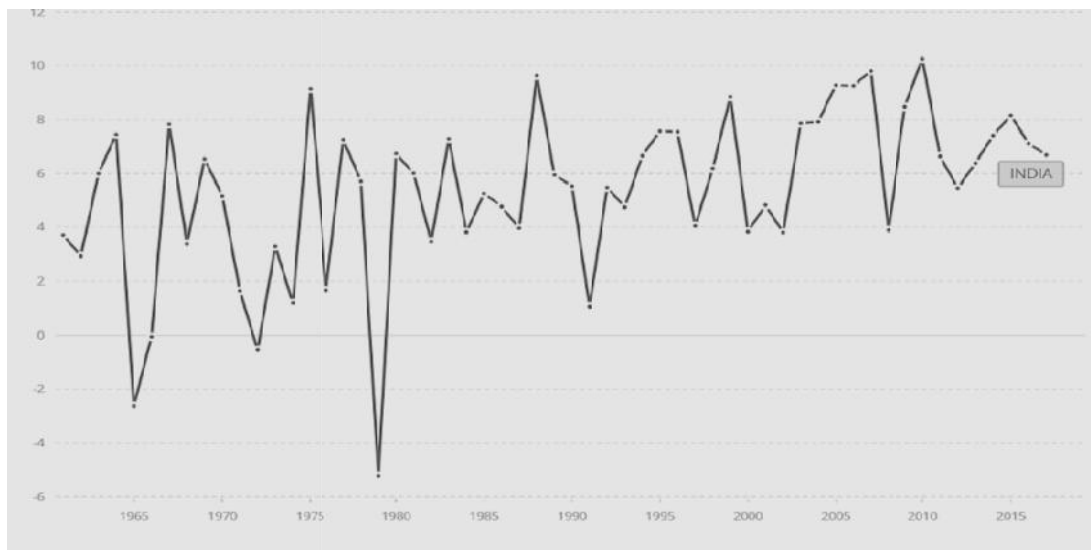


Figure 1: GDP of India over the years (Source: World Bank, 2018)

According to the census 2011 report, one-fifth (19.1%) of the Indian population was the youth (15-24 years). It is estimated that by the year 2020, the youth will account for 34.33% in the total population (Anant, 2018). Since the Indian youth accounts for most of the Indian population, they become the primary subject of the economic status of the country. While the youth enhances the capability of an economy to further develop (Dev and Venkatanarayan, 2004), the economy must also be suitable of its youth in terms of their standards of living. For the country to achieve idea living standards, it must provide its youth with more than just the basic necessities for living. This paper, therefore, covers three major concerns that threaten such a living- unemployment, poverty and mental health.

### Demographic Dividend

The demographic dividend is the rise in the rate of economic growth as a resultant of increased share of the working age people in a population (Balaram, 1986). Most of the Indian population belongs to the age group 15-65, suggesting a relatively low dependency ratio. India's ability to use its demographic dividend as a source of economic welfare really depends on the youth's involvement in the workforce. The lack of availability of proper workforce opportunities, poor employability and the under utilisation of skills may lead the "demographic dividend" of India to transform to a "demographic nightmare" (Majumder and Mukherjee, 2018). In order to curb the possibility of such a situation, the Indian government needs to tackle the possible threats to its youth. This paper mainly explores three issues that were considered most relevant to the youth in terms of their economic well-being- unemployment, poverty and mental health.

### Unemployment

According to the International Labour Organisation 2013, unemployment is a situation of joblessness when one is actively seeking for a job but is currently without one. According to the Central Statistics Office Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation of Social Statistics Division by the Government of India, 42.6 percent of the economically active youth population faces unemployment or has low income jobs, constituting to poverty. The issue of unemployment relies majorly on the inability of the economy to produce skill-efficient jobs. The long term turmoil generated by unemployment creates concrete problems. There may be a subsequent fall in the GDP, impacting the standards of living of the economy, with increase in poverty.

Moreover, the potential threat to social stability and internal security may increase due to the greater mental instability generated by the unemployed youth (Young, 1999). Therefore, the government of India aims to achieve maximum utilisation of its labour force. To provide sufficient employment, it must therefore, impose strict policies and reforms (Majumder and Mukherjee, 2018). By stabilising the youth employment in the country, the overall economic and social well-being of the population is likely to increase (Talreja, 2014). If unemployment fails to decrease, the Indian economy may witness extreme poverty which may subsequently hinder the standards of living of the Indian population.

**Poverty**

As the Scottish Poverty International Unit defines, poverty is the inability of the individual to afford the basic necessities for living. The state of poverty often incurs due to the lack of sufficient jobs or economic instability. With about one-third of the population below the poverty line, India holds 75 million of the poorest in the poor index (World bank, 2018). The living wage, that is the wages required to fulfill the basic necessities of individuals, is required to be 18500.00 INR/Month. However, the average living wage of an Indian is 10300 INR/month (WageIndicator foundation, 2018). The misuse of the human capital, the skills of the Indian youth, has ultimately reduced the economic stability. Poverty, as a result, has had severe aftermaths. Poverty has not only hindered the economic growth but also the welfare of the youth. It has led to more incidences of mental health issues such as depression, only to enhance the downfall of the Indian "demographic dividend". Even though such a problem has long been a subject of irrelevance for certain corners of the Indian society, this paper stresses on much of its importance and the need for the country to address this challenge.

**Mental Health**

Mental health associates with the psychological well-being of the individuals. It mainly associates with various health issues that need immediate attention (Sunitha and Gururaj, 2014). The youth is likely to experience such issues due to personal choices, environmental influences and lifestyle changes. As found by the World Health Organisation (WHO), the Indian youth is the most depressed youth population in this world. The average suicide rate in India is 10.9 for every lakh people. The majority who commit suicide lie below the age of 44. The mental health problems may be both, an aftermath and the reason of unemployment and poverty (Sriram, 2018). The country's inability to treat mental health as the root cause of economic instability may therefore undermine the youth's productivity. The current paper considers mental health as an important factor since it is not largely publicly acknowledged as one that has the ability to downgrade the potential of demographic dividends.

The researcher believes that the discussion surrounding the demographic dividend of India stands as an essential topic for greater long term economic stability. Therefore, this research paper mainly focuses on the threats imposed on the youth in terms of unemployment, poverty and mental health and ultimately aims to highlight possible solutions to minimise such threats.

**Method****• Aim**

The aim of the research was to explore based on the challenges faced by the youth in terms of unemployment, poverty and mental health. The information obtained was synthesized into meaningful discussions and links.

**• Objectives**

This research paper aims to study the impact of three major challenges on the demographic dividend of India. Specific objectives are:

- To study the impact of unemployment on the demographic dividend.
- To study the impact of poverty on the Indian youth.
- To study the issues regarding the mental health of the youth.

**Procedure**

The data collection procedure mainly involved an in-depth study and analysis of previously published research papers and other credible secondary sources. To enrich the data collected from secondary sources, the research incorporated primary sources such as interviews with Subject Matter Experts (SMEs). Subject Matter Experts were able to enable the researcher to procure a disinterested approach on the research topic, and their intellectual opinions helped formulate a better link between the factors discussed in this paper. The interviews were conducted with two professors associated with teaching and research in the fields of psychology and economics. Prof. SujataSriram, a Ph.D, M.Sc.qualified Professor of Human Ecology at Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, was interviewed to discuss the impact of mental health related issues on the demographic dividend. Prof. R. Ramakumar, NABARD Chair Professor at the School of Development Studies at Tata Institute of Social Sciences, was interviewed to further gain insights about the impact of unemployment and poverty on the Indian youth. The interview conducted was semi-structured in nature and an interview guide was prepared beforehand by the researcher in consultation with the guide, to outline a rough structure of the questions to be asked (Appendix B).

### Data Analysis

The data obtained through primary and secondary research was further analysed. The secondary data found was mostly qualitative. The secondary data was represented diagrammatically and consolidated; a compiled table of statistics over the years was presented. In case of primary research, the researcher carried out content analysis of the interviews. For this, each interview was transcribed word to word and coded. Each essential idea was colour coded, corresponding to the central idea it presented. These central ideas were then reduced to major themes attempting to respond to the objectives of the research paper. Similar method was used to reduce secondary data into key themes relevant to the objectives of the paper.

### Ethical Considerations

The researcher, at all times, tried to eliminate any type of bias. Interviewees were asked for their permission before the data was recorded and used for further analysis. No data was misused or given to any individual other than researcher herself. The researcher avoided any question that was associated with the interviewee's personal life. At all times, it was ensured that a professional environment was maintained, and the interviewee's reluctance to answer any question was thoroughly respected. Over all, no data could potentially harm any individual who was or was not a part of the interview socially or personally.

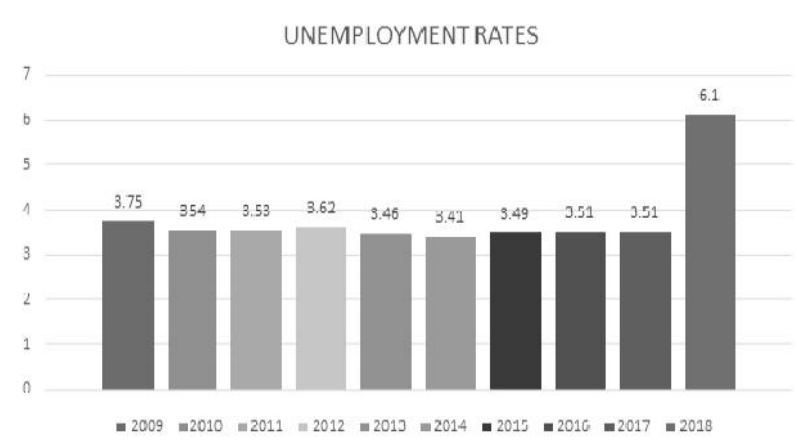
### Results and Discussion

The aim of the research was to investigate and analyse the three challenges faced by the demographic dividend of India- unemployment, poverty and mental health. The researcher obtained data through both primary and secondary methods of data collection. The primary data was obtained by interviews of subject matter experts and the secondary data was collected by various research papers.

It was further found through the thematic analysis of interviews and the secondary data that the information based on this topic spread into various themes. The themes were majorly divided into "Challenges faced by the demographic dividend", "The underlying reasons behind these challenges", "How to combat challenges faced by the youth", "The link between unemployment, poverty and mental health" and "Evaluation of the solutions".

### Challenges Faced by the Demographic Dividend

The challenges faced by the demographic dividends outlined the subordinating issues associated with unemployment, poverty and mental health. The primary data procured through the interview of Prof. R. Ramakumar reflected the primary challenge as the correct utilization of the massive Indian manpower. The excess supply of this manpower counters the low derived demand for the same, widening the gap of unemployment. The secondary research findings aligned with his opinion. Similar challenges were reiterated and statistically proven. The Indian economy has failed to generate enough employment opportunities to allow the entrance of new labours in the labour market (Sinha, 2013). The Annual employment and unemployment report (2017-2018) also indicates that the economy had its greatest unemployment rates in the year 2018 (Refer to Figure 2), with a peak high of 6.1%.



**Figure 3: Unemployment Rates in India over the years**  
(Source: The Annual employment and unemployment report (2017-2018)).

Subsequently, employing the same manpower in such a way that their productivity is maximized is essentially the principal challenge the government should address. Moreover, the other issue related with unemployment dictated the lack of education and adequate skills to match the needs of top markets (Ramakumar, 2018). The inadequacy of qualitative education has generated a "skilled" population that is rather unfit to match the growing market needs. This paradoxical situation needs to be resolved by individuals, the industries and the government.

This issue broadens as the forces of demand and supply are unable to meet for jobs, disrupting the ability of individuals to become more employable (Ramakumar, 2018). As the Indian economic growth rate lowers over the years, a majority of the youth is faced with jobs that are not decent enough to match their qualifications (Sinha, 2013). The unavailability of sufficient employment that match the qualifications of individuals has lead them to become self- employed or even opt for casual and contract jobs (Biswas, 2016). According to the International Labour Organisation's publication, *women and men in the informal economy: a statistical picture, third edition (2018)*, 80.9% of the employed in India belong to the informal sector, only 6.5% in the formal sector and 0.8% in the households. In the informal sector, 70.3% were own account workers or self employed workers and, 14.9% were contributing family workers (ILO, 2018). Moreover, in the Asian-Pacific region, 86.3% of the youth (15-25 years) belongs to the informal sector (ILO, 2018). While the employees are unable to find jobs that require their specific skill set, the situation can be reversed. There also remains an imbalance of what employers expect from their employees and the qualifications of the employees, ultimately hindering the youth's growth (Sabharwal, 2013).

Overall, such unemployment challenges have not only hindered the economic growth, but also the welfare of the economy. It has resulted in increased crime rates, mental health issues, violence, drug taking and social exclusion (Mitra and Verick, 2013). The Global Peace Index ranks India as the 137th country out of 163 countries in terms of peace, with the score of 2.504 (Global Peace Index, 2018). It has been ranked as a country with "low" state of peace. The ongoing domestic and international conflicts associated with violence and crime in India is high, as it stands 17th last in the category, with the score of 2.826 (Global Peace Index, 2018). Moreover, nearly 75% of the Indian homes have one member consuming drugs, this reflects the existence of substance abuse by the Indian population, most specifically the youth. This therefore escalates the issue of mental health as a major challenge faced by the youth.

Unemployment has ultimately generated social security threats to the Indian population, especially women. According to the Thomson Reuters foundation 2018, India is said to be the most dangerous country for women. With such unemployment challenges that have lead to various societal complications, there is an apparent increase in poverty as well. Of the Indian population, 21.9% lives below poverty line, as per the Central Intelligence Agency. According to the World Poverty clock 2019, 48 million people live under extreme poverty- a state when they are deprived of even the most basic necessities available. Moreover, majority of the casual workers and self-employed have been self-exploited since they are without any kind of protection (Sinha, 2013).

To further dwell on challenges faced by the Indian youth in terms of mental health, Prof. Sriram talks of stress as the chief indicator of mental health problems. India holds the most stressed youth population in the world (Sriram, 2018). Of the global average of 86% of stressed individuals, 95% are the youth, as per the 2018 Cigna 360 Well-Being Survey. One in 20 people in India suffer depression (National Crime Bureau, 2015). Moreover, with increasing youth suicidal tendency globally, India has become a hub of growing suicide rates. According to the survey by World Health Organisation (WHO) in 2016, India's suicide rate reached 16.3%, making its place in the leading 20 countries with the highest suicide mortality rate. The youth is likely to be the most vulnerable age group to attempt suicides (National Crime Records Bureau, 2015). The rising stress levels have ultimately developed suicidal tendencies amongst the youth; suicidal tendencies among youth are often a result of familial pressure and growing health issues.

Mental disorders place much of a threat on the Indian society's mortality, morbidity and socio-economic issues (Singh and Gururaj, 2014). With increasing suicide rates, the country also experiences high rates of depression, anxiety and other mental illnesses. In the Indian population, 13.7% suffer from mental illness, of which 10.6% requires immediate action, based on a study conducted by the National Institute of Mental Health & Neuroscience, 2016. Moreover, these mental health issues are usually unspoken of, and these very problems lead to the degradation of skills and lack of utilisation of individual potential (Singh and Gururaj, 2014). Therefore, the researcher strongly believes mental health to be an important aspect that needs to be addressed in order to improve the living standards of the youth.

### The Reasons behind these Challenges

When we move to analysing the reasons behind these challenges, we attempt to investigate why these challenges occur in the first place. The youth majorly receives insufficient education since there is a lack of supply of secondary schools which has led to lower secondary school enrolment rates (Dreze and Sen, 2012). The skill levels of those who join the workforce is low since most of the workers who join the labour market are school dropouts and lack the sufficient skills (Mitra and Verick, 2013). Based on the report by UDISE 2015-2016, the average dropout rate of girls is 16.88% and the average dropout rate of boys is 17.21%.

| Level                     | All Categories |        |        | SC    |        |       | ST    |        |       |
|---------------------------|----------------|--------|--------|-------|--------|-------|-------|--------|-------|
|                           | Male           | Female | Total  | Male  | Female | Total | Male  | Female | Total |
| Primary (I-V)             | 67609          | 62892  | 130501 | 13427 | 12585  | 26012 | 7309  | 6824   | 14133 |
| Upper Primary (VI-VIII)   | 34501          | 32664  | 67165  | 6731  | 6399   | 13130 | 3371  | 3181   | 6552  |
| Elementary (I-VIII)       | 102110         | 95556  | 197666 | 20158 | 18984  | 39142 | 10680 | 10005  | 20685 |
| Secondary (IX-X)          | 20121          | 18180  | 38301  | 3747  | 3403   | 7150  | 1678  | 1574   | 3252  |
| I-X                       | 122231         | 113736 | 235967 | 23905 | 22387  | 46292 | 12358 | 11579  | 23937 |
| Senior Secondary (XI-XII) | 12440          | 11061  | 23501  | 2170  | 1964   | 4134  | 802   | 715    | 1517  |
| I-XII                     | 134671         | 124797 | 259468 | 26075 | 24351  | 50426 | 13160 | 12294  | 25454 |
| Ph.D.                     | 70             | 48     | 118    | NA    | NA     | NA    | NA    | NA     | NA    |
| M.Phil.                   | 14             | 19     | 33     | NA    | NA     | NA    | NA    | NA     | NA    |
| Post Graduate             | 1867           | 1986   | 3853   | NA    | NA     | NA    | NA    | NA     | NA    |
| Under Graduate            | 14467          | 12705  | 27172  | NA    | NA     | NA    | NA    | NA     | NA    |
| PG Diploma                | 121            | 94     | 215    | NA    | NA     | NA    | NA    | NA     | NA    |
| Diploma                   | 1788           | 720    | 2508   | NA    | NA     | NA    | NA    | NA     | NA    |
| Certificate               | 74             | 96     | 170    | NA    | NA     | NA    | NA    | NA     | NA    |
| Integrated                | 87             | 55     | 142    | NA    | NA     | NA    | NA    | NA     | NA    |
| Higher Education Total    | 18488          | 15723  | 34211  | 2504  | 2102   | 4607  | 894   | 747    | 1641  |

**Figure 4: Level-wise Enrolment in School & Higher Education 2014-15 (In thousands)**

(Source: Government of India- Ministry of Human Resource Development Department of School Education & Literacy, New Delhi, 2016)

Figure 4 indicates that the enrolment rates for classes 1-12 are much higher than that of higher education. This suggests that the rate of enrolment in higher education is much lower than the dropout rate indicating that out of the 259468 people who enrolled, only 34211 attended higher education, implying that 225257 people who enrolled for secondary education dropped out. This may be so because individuals may not be able to meet with the growing market needs (Mitra and Verick, 2013). Moreover, unavailability of sound skill development policies may have plagued unemployment in the country (Ramakumar, 2018). The Indian government has taken several measures to provide sufficient vocational training. It launched the National Policy for Skill development in the year 2015 to primarily “ help create an appropriate ecosystem that facilitates imparting employable skills to its growing workforce over the next few decades” (Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship). Moreover, “ It aims to provide an umbrella framework to all skilling activities being carried out within the country, to align them to common standards and link skilling with demand centres”.

Other policies that have been introduced over the past decade have been Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Swarnajayanti Gram SwarozgarYojana (SGSY) and Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY) (Sinha, 2013). However, although new skill development policies have been introduced by the government, they are still inadequate to sufficiently educate the youth which is unskilled. Moreover, skill development programs may not reach out to a large number of the population base. Furthermore, the increasing number of casual and contract workers inhabiting in impoverished conditions may be essentially due to the inhumane employment conditions such as long working hours, low wages and low levels of security (Sinha, 2013). Workers are exploited,

and the absence of social security systems decreases the effective reinforcement of basic labour laws and rights (Sinha, 2013). However, there is data that contradicts the claim. According to the Michael Page's Job Confidence Index Q1 2017, 62% Indian employees are "satisfied or very satisfied" with their job and working conditions. Thus, while some research suggests of these reasons as causes behind of the challenges faced by the youth, there are researches which show otherwise.

### **How to Combat Challenges Faced by the Youth**

The most essential area that requires answers is how to deal with such pertinent and overarching challenges. From the producer's perspective, the government may reinforce supply side policies to boost the aggregate supply. The subsequent increase in the aggregate supply would provide firms with an incentive to produce enhancing the need of labour, hence, tackling the issue of unemployment. The government must facilitate more skill development programs and introduce more broad-based education policies (Ramakumar, 2018). It must also ensure that education is widely accessible and well rendered to all corners of the society especially those that are in dire need of skill education (Ramakumar, 2018). Other possible solutions that could lead to a subsequent alignment between the demand and supply of the labour market may be reinforcing labour law reforms and introducing public-private partnerships (PPPs) (Sabharwal, 2013). The government may also provide vocational training and employment generation programmes. It may also be necessary for highlighting the role of trade unions in the economy. Trade unions allow the implementation of national policies and programme formulations (Sinha, 2013). The government recently has passed the trade unions amendment bill in 2018, which has led to the recognition of 13 central trade unions. The economy must therefore continue to harbour trade union practises and the recognise new unions to develop a powerful workforce in the economy. There is also a need to boost the formal employment in the country (Sanghi and Srija, 2014). To do so, the Indian government under the current Prime Minister, Mr. Narendra Modi did take measures to formalise the economy. The country was faced with demonetization and other essential policies to decrease the informal sector. While the economy is reaching out to minimise the existence of casual workers, the informal economy accounts for a large percentage of the entire economy. Thus, it subsequently remains difficult to come up with policy measures which are likely to impact the economy holistically. In addition to these measures, it is also essential to advance the quality of education, upgrade the availability of vocational training and also provide an interface between industry, policy makers and training institutions (Sanghi and Srija, 2014).

The government may also foster employment by manipulating the aggregate demand for its products. It may be desirable for the economy to implement expansionary fiscal policy. This may be done by reducing tax rates and increasing government spending, leading to increased aggregate demand, hence leading to economic growth (Visaria, 2016). Such high aggregate demand would give firms an incentive to produce more, allowing them to employ more workers, and therefore decreasing the level of unemployment. Similarly, the government may reduce its interest rates, lowering the cost of credit and hence persuading the consumers to spend rather than save (Visaria, 2016). This would boost the aggregate demand, causing rise in production activity and hence improving the derived demand for labour. To combat poverty, employment should be maximised. While poverty can be tackled at various different fronts, the most efficient possible way could be that of introduction of skill generation and employment policies (Ramakumar, 2018). Moreover, solutions to eradicate unemployment would have a subsequent impact on reduction of poverty. Hence, solutions of reducing unemployment and poverty are similar.

The issue of mental health needs to be viewed from a more individual platform unlike unemployment and poverty which are tackled at a systematic level. Similar to physical health, mental health requires individuals to accept and follow lifestyle changes necessary for a healthy lifestyle (Sriram, 2018). It is vital to adopt for introspective methods which urge us to question one's authenticity with self such as, doing the job one really enjoys (Sriram, 2018).

### **Evaluation of the Solutions**

Although these solutions have been proposed, there are limitations that restrict their effective implementation. In case of skill development programs, the inability of the government to correctly distribute such skill development programs across the nation hinders the applicability of such a solution (Ramakumar, 2018). Moreover, it also seems difficult to render skills to the uneducated section of the society as their capacity to grasp the skills is likely to be relatively lower than the educated sector (Ramakumar, 2018). Moreover, fiscal policy may lead to deficits as the government may essentially need to give away its own tax revenue and spend the limited government revenue on enhancing employment. The issue of opportunity cost heightens as the government may have otherwise spent the same funds on other sectors such as defence.

There are various issues associated with the establishment of trade unions. Trade unions have not always resulted in desirable outcomes. Unions often may gain monopoly power, which in turn may become disadvantageous to the economy in terms of efficient allocation of resources (Addison, 2014). Moreover, these trade unions may not necessarily develop a healthy working environment and may increase possibilities of conflicts between employees and even the employer and the employee, risking the chance of workers getting fired. The existence of introspective methods has long been considered rather tedious to implement since the extent to which they are likely to succeed is dependent solely on consumers who function in an unpredictable manner. Similarly, while tackling the problem of unemployment from the consumer's perspective, the biggest limitation faced is the unaccountable behaviour of the consumer which may change due to other social factors. With the availability of such solutions, there come restrictions that may slow their effectiveness.

Unemployment and poverty illustrate a direct relationship- as when an individual tends to be unemployed, his costs of living rises dramatically. With rising living costs, the affordability of basic necessities decreases leading to a subsequent rise in poverty. Subsequently, unemployment has also increased the prevalence of mental health issues since the thought of being unemployed often directs to mental health issues such as depression (Sriram, 2018). According to the World Health Organisation 2017, "people who experienced acute (sudden economic crisis) or chronic (poor income households) economic adversities are more vulnerable to developing depression". Moreover, poverty connects with mental health especially when you are faced with notions of scarcity, your attitude is less likely to be positive, and as a result, this may adversely affect mental health (Sriram, 2018).

### **Conclusion**

The three challenges faced by the youth, namely unemployment, poverty and mental health have been closely linked through this paper and it has been established that the existence of one may naturally lead to another. Therefore, the researcher believes it is essential to holistically view the problem and then generate solutions which interconnect the three challenges. By referring to the primary and secondary data, the researcher asserts how increasing unemployment, poverty and mental health issues have impacted the Indian youth, and through research and consultation, the researcher has tried to list possible solutions which may better the living situations. Mental health and its effect on the Indian youth challenges is still a relatively new subject of interest, and hence, still has further scope of research. This research paper hints that the existence of mental health is a similar challenge to the youth as unemployment and poverty as it pushes the "demographic dividend" to become a "demographic nightmare". The researcher consistently reiterates the need of individuals, states, the country and the world to look at the increasing challenges and eventually come up with feasible solutions and effective policies to unwind the complex matter. The biggest strength of this research paper is that it covers mental health as an equally essential topic as unemployment and poverty. It provides a wide image of the current scenario of the country and further talks about the possible solutions to the challenges faced by the youth of the country.

However, the findings of the research are limited, as the scope of the research is vast and yet to be explored. This paper only outlines the three challenges which can be explored from various aspects more extensively. Moreover, the primary research collection is restricted to only two subject matter experts, reducing the extent of data triangulation. However, the researcher hopes to put across various different solutions to the problem she mentions as important. The research can therefore be used to help in the production of new policies to fight against unemployment, poverty and mental health.

For future research, the researcher insists on further developing on the mental health aspect of the paper, and aims for further new research on the same. Moreover, future research may provide a greater extent of solutions at individual and global platform. Other researchers may include more primary data collection such as surveys and more interviews of the subject matter experts. For the demographic dividend to continue to strive to achieve what could be a revolutionary change in the economy; every individual, every firm, every state government must realise the potent that rests in the hands of the Indian youth. The country must nurture its most influential weapon, its youth, to fight the devils of economic instability. Thus, it becomes imperative for the government to tackle these hindrances in the road to ultimate economic prosperity.

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## II. Appendix B

### Interview guide for Professor R. Ramakumar

Good afternoon Sir, I am Avantika Saboo, a grade 11 IB student conducting research under Shiromi Ma'am. Thank you so much for taking out the time to have this telephonic interview with me. If you allow, may I record this conversation for future reference? I am doing a research paper titled- Challenges faced by the demographic dividend of India in terms of: Unemployment, Poverty and Mental Health. I am hoping to ask you certain questions pertaining to the Unemployment and Poverty section of my research topic and gain better understanding of the same.

May I begin?

- **Question 1**  
What are some of the major economic challenges faced by the demographic dividend according to you?
- **Question 2**  
Could you elaborate on the impact of unemployment on the Indian Youth ?
- **Question 3**  
According to you, how does poverty affect the Indian Youth?
- **Question 4**  
According to you, what strategies can be used to combat Unemployment and Poverty? (At various levels- Individual, state and national)
- **Question 5**  
In my research I am focusing on 3 challenges faced by the youth- Poverty, Unemployment and Mental Health.  
How would you rank the three?  
Thank you so much for your valuable insights and for taking the time and talk to me!

### Interview Guide for Professor Sriram

Good afternoon Ma'am, I am Avantika Saboo, a grade 11 IB student conducting research under Shiromi Ma'am. Thank you so much for taking out the time to have this telephonic interview with me. If you allow, may I record this conversation for future reference? I am doing a research paper titled- Challenges faced by the demographic dividend of India in terms of: Unemployment, Poverty and Mental Health. I am hoping to ask you certain questions pertaining to the Mental Health section of my research topic and gain better understanding of the same.

May I begin?

- **Question 1**  
What are some of the major mental health challenges faced by the demographic dividend according to you?
- **Question 2**  
Could you elaborate about some of the aspects of mental health that the youth struggles with most?
- **Question 3**  
According to you, what strategies can be used to combat these mental health issues? (At various levels- Individual, state and national)
- **Question 4**  
In my research I am focusing on 2 challenges faced by the youth- Poverty, Unemployment and Mental Health.  
Where would you rank Mental Health while comparing the three?  
Thank you so much for your valuable insights and for taking the time and talk to me!.

