



Mains Practice Question

Q. Harnessing demographic dividend for country's growth would require rural-centric policies. Discuss.

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Approach

- Start the answer by briefly discussing the context of rising unemployment in India.
- Discuss the rural-centric policies that can help to harness the demographic dividend.
- Conclude Suitably.

Introduction

India is one of the youngest countries in the world, where the proportion of the rural youth population forms the majority share in India's youth population. However, in recent years unemployment rates have been on the rise.

Moreover, agriculture and allied activities constitute the bulk of the rural economy, its dominance has been dwindling over the years. Therefore, engaging rural youth in productive agricultural activities will help India to reap the benefits of the demographic dividend.

Body

Rural-Centric Policies to Harness Demographic Dividend

- **Promoting Agri-Tech:** There is a need to promote emerging Agri-technologies that have a huge potential for job creation.
 - For example, agri-based e-commerce, information technology (IT)-linked agri-extension, seed technology, biotechnology, farm monitoring, Agri/rural fin-tech
- **Promoting Allied Agriculture Activities:** Horticultural, dairy production, and food processing (related to these sectors) offer much more opportunities for employment generation in rural areas.
- **Harvesting Solar Energy:** The idea of harvesting solar energy as the third crop on the farmer's field is also a viable option for increasing employability and profits for them.
- **Skilling Rural Youth:** There is a need for transition from agriculture-centric jobs towards manufacturing and service-sectors related jobs.
 - In this context, the quality of training at industrial training institutes (ITIs)/polytechnics needs to be strengthened by redesigning the curriculum and upgrading them through appropriate budgetary allocations under the National Skill Development Fund.
- **Promoting Rural Tourism:** Rural tourism in India is still in the developing stage but once tapped to its full potential, it can open great vistas of mutual benefit for both the tourists as well as the rural people alike

Conclusion

In order to leverage this demographic dividend, there is a need to have a systematic approach to creating

a suitable environment to develop opportunities for gainful employment of the rural youth.

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