Demographic Transition and Opportunity for India

For Prelims: Economic Survey, Periodic Labour Force Survey, National Family Health Surveys, Malnutrition, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCS).

For Mains: Significance of India's Demographic Dividend, Challenges Associated with India's Demographic Dividend.

Why in News?

The world is going through a **phase of** demographic transition **towards aged populations.** Adaptation strategies will require **governments, businesses and common people to make key adjustments.**

- This may usher in a great opportunity for India that is **experiencing a demographic dividend.**

What is the Demographic Transition and Demographic Dividend?

- A **demographic shift refers to a change in the composition of a population over time.**
  - This change can occur due to various factors such as **changes in birth and death rates, migration patterns,** and changes in social and economic conditions.
- A **demographic dividend** is a phenomenon that occurs when a country's population structure shifts from having a high proportion of dependents (children and elderly) to having a **higher proportion of working-age adults.**
  - This change in population structure can result in economic growth and development if the country invests in its **human capital and creates conditions for productive employment.**

What is the Significance of India's Demographic Dividend?

- **About:**
  - India **entered the demographic dividend opportunity window in 2005-06** and will remain there till **2055-56.**
  - India's median age is markedly **lower than that of the US or China.**
    - While the median ages of the **US and China are already 38 and 39 respectively,** India's median age is not expected to reach 38 until 2050.
- **Challenges Associated with India's Demographic Dividend:**
  - **Low Female Labour Force Participation:** India's labour force is constrained by the **absence of women from the workforce.**
    - As per **Periodic Labour Force Survey 2020- 2021,** female labour workforce participation stands at **25.1%**.
  - **Environmental Degradation:** India's rapid economic growth and urbanisation have led to **significant environmental degradation**, including **air pollution**, **water pollution, and deforestation.**
    - Addressing these issues is essential to **ensuring sustainable economic growth.**
  - **High Dropout Rate:** While over 95% of India's children attend primary school, the

National Family Health Surveys confirm that poor infrastructure in **government schools,** malnutrition**, and scarcity of trained teachers** have resulted in poor learning outcomes and **high dropout ratios.**

- **Lack of Employment Opportunities:** With a large and growing working-age population, **Indian job market is not able to generate enough jobs to meet the demands of this expanding workforce.**
  - This has resulted in high rates of **underemployment and unemployment.**
- **Lack of Adequate Infrastructure:** Poor infrastructure, including **inadequate education and health facilities, transportation, power, and communication network,** makes it challenging for people to access basic services and employment opportunities, **particularly in rural areas.**
- **Brain Drain:** India has a large pool of **highly skilled and talented professionals,** but many of them choose to **leave the country in search of better job opportunities** and living conditions abroad.
  - This brain drain is a significant loss for India, as **it results in a shortage of skilled workers and limits the country's ability** to fully leverage its demographic dividend.

How India can Utilise its Demographic Dividend?

- **Gender Equality:** India needs to address **gender inequality** in education and employment, including **improving access to education and employment opportunities for women.**
  - Women's participation in the workforce can increase economic growth and lead to a more inclusive society.
- **Raising Education Standards**: In both rural and urban settings, the public school system must ensure that **every child completes high school and goes on to skilling, training, and vocational education.**
  - The modernization of school curricula along with the implementation of **Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCS)** and the establishment of open digital universities will further contribute to India's qualified workforce.
- **Encouraging Entrepreneurship:** India needs to encourage entrepreneurship and innovation, particularly among the youth, to **create job opportunities and contribute to economic growth.**

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q1. In the context of any country, which one of the following would be considered as part of its social capital? (2019)

(a) The proportion of literates in the population
(b) The stock of its buildings, other infrastructure and machines
(c) The size of population in the working age group
(d) The level of mutual trust and harmony in the society

Ans: (d)

Q2. India is regarded as a country with "Demographic Dividend". This is due to (2011)

(a) Its high population in the age group below 15 years
(b) Its high population in the age group of 15-64 year
(c) Its high population in the age group above 65 years
(d) Its high total population

Ans: (b)

Mains

Q1. Discuss the main objectives of Population Education and point out the measures to achieve them in India in detail. **(2021)**

Q2. ‘’Empowering women is the key to control the population growth.’’ Discuss. **(2019)**

Q3. Critically examine whether growing population is the cause of poverty or poverty is the main cause of population increase in India. **(2015)**

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