ARTICLES

HEALTH AND EMPLOYMENT THREATS OF INDIA'S DEMOGRAPHIC POTENTIAL: NO PANACEA?

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ABSTRACT

Age structure of a country is inextricably mixed with the economic growth through demographic dividend. In this paper, the extent of demographic dividend is arrived at by distinguishing support ratios from 2004-2050.[1] *While encomiums are galore about the benefits and blessings of demographic dividend, its sustainability is at stake as little health and employment dividends are forthcoming out of it. The paper empirically proves that the health scenario of the country is in serious jeopardy. On unemployment, it invariably finds that there is an absolute decline in employment since 2011-12 which doesn't bode well for India.*[2] *These corroborate the fact that realisation of dividend is illusory. The paper, therefore, pitches for spectacular spike in the allocation for health and education sectors and their prudent spending sans much ado so that population dividend can make its edifice.*

Keywords: Demographic dividend, Health, Employment, India

1. Background of the Study

Human capital, indisputably, is a driver of economic growth of any nation. A vibrant and qualitative human capital is an invaluable asset of a nation.

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But mere increase in quantity does not augur well. This is an unwelcome bulge that strains a country's potential. The productivity of populace, especially in terms of health and employment is a sine qua non for catapulting the country to a higher growth trajectory. Preservation of this productive populace palpably requires ideal policy framework, enactment of good laws and meticulous planning. This paper argues that although India is sitting on young blood, its sustainability is suspicious due to her inability to translate its human capital into health capital and employment capital. There is a host of factors that spoil the harnessing of the dividend profitably. While the bulge age group is on the rise on the one side, the disease burden and deficit in employability is on the rise on the other side. Article 47 of the Constitution mentions the "duty of the state to raise the level of nutrition and the standard of living and to improve public health. The state shall regard the raising of the level of nutrition and the standard of living of its people and the improvement of public health as among its primary duties."

Even though independent studies on Demographic Dividend (Narayana, 2009, 2014; Chandrasekhar et al., 2006; Mason, 2005a, 2005b; Navaneetham, 2002; Bloom et al., 2000); on unemployment scenario (India Skills Report, 2018; Vyas, 2018; Abraham, 2017; Shaw, 2013); and on health scenario (Vinita, 2016; World Health Organisation, 2014; Rao, 2017; UNICEF, 2012) are aplenty in Indian context, no seminal study on the challenges of demographic dividend with respect to poor employment and health conditions has been undertaken so far in Indian context. The factors viz. desperate employment generation and precarious health conditions stymieing the sustainability of demographic dividend is often less talked about. The euphoria over sizeable demographic dividend of India is, therefore, bedimmed by health and unemployment albatross gripping our economy. It is in this context that the relevance of the present study comes to the fore.

The paper mainly hinges on secondary data for the study. To examine the extent of demographic dividend and its futuristic trends, the eminent works of Prof. M.R. Narayana (2009, 2014) have been made use of. For analysing the unemployment situation, employment-unemployment survey of National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) and Labour Bureau have been resorted to. Information on the pitiable health conditions has been drawn from Global Nutrition Report (2016), International Food Policy Research Institute, which prepares and publishes Global Hunger Index Report (2018), World Health Organisation (2014), Indian Council of Medical Research (2017), Rao (2017) and Rapid Survey on Children (2013). In addition to this, persistent underfunding in the critical sectors viz. health and education have also been brought to the limelight using the data from budget documents during the year 2015-16 to 2018-19.

The structure of the paper is as follows. Section 2 explains about the extent of demographic dividend in India and its behemoth potential in the years to come. Section 3 narrates the disastrous health scenario of India. Section 4 discusses the perilous unemployment scenario of India. Section 5 maintains that instead of being a sheet anchor, the government has stooped into tapering off the allocation in critical sectors like education and health. Section 6 concludes the way forward to make the Dividend a vibrant one.

2. Extent of Demographic Dividend

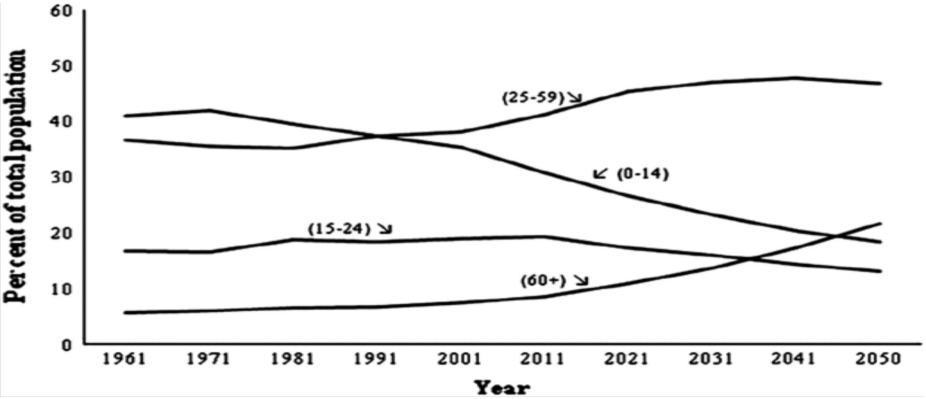
The Economic Survey for 2012-13 says, "Nearly half the additions to the Indian labour force over the period 2011-30 will be in the age group of 30-49, even while the share of this group in China, Korea, and the United States will be declining. That India will be expanding its most productive cohorts even while most developed countries and some developing countries like China will be contracting theirs in the coming decades can be another source of advantage." India is predicted to undergo a remarkable age structure transition by a decline in the share of younger population, an increase in the share of older population, and the highest share of working population.

Census 2011 says that Youth (15-24 years) in India constitutes one-fifth (19.1 per cent) of India's total population. India is expected to have 34.33 per cent share of youth in total population by 2020. India is also expected to remain younger than China and Indonesia, the two major countries other than India, which determine the demographic features of Asia. The National Youth Policy (NYP-2014) launched in February 2014 proposes a holistic 'vision' for the youth of India, which is "to empower youth of the country to achieve their full potential, and through them enable India to find its rightful place in the community of nations". The NYP-2014 has defined 'youth' as persons in the age-group of 15-29 years. However, the proportion of youth among females is generally lower on account of better longevity of females as compared to males. As per the Annual Report of the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports (Department of Youth Affairs), 2016-17, by the year 2020, India would have a median age of 28 years as compared to 38 years of other South Asian nations and China. The Indian population under the age group of 15-29 comprises 27.5 of the total population, thus giving India a favourable demographic edge. Benefits of demographic dividend depend on good policies, captured by indices such as openness of the economy or the quality of government institutions (Chandrasekhar et al., 2006).

Figure 1 narrates a declining share of younger population coupled with rising share of elderly population and working age population. The younger population showed signs of decline right from the year 1971 and the decline became sharper since the year 2001. The trend of working age population (15-24 years) is such that it rose from the year 1971and continued its momentum up to the year 2011 and then there is a trivial decline. As regards

the working age population (25-29 years), it can be gauged that there is a steep rise since the year 1981 and it is on the go-up to the year 2021 and then appears more or less stable. Regarding the old age population, it is evident that there is a steady increase between the period 1961-2011 since the year 2011 and thereafter the increase became steeper.

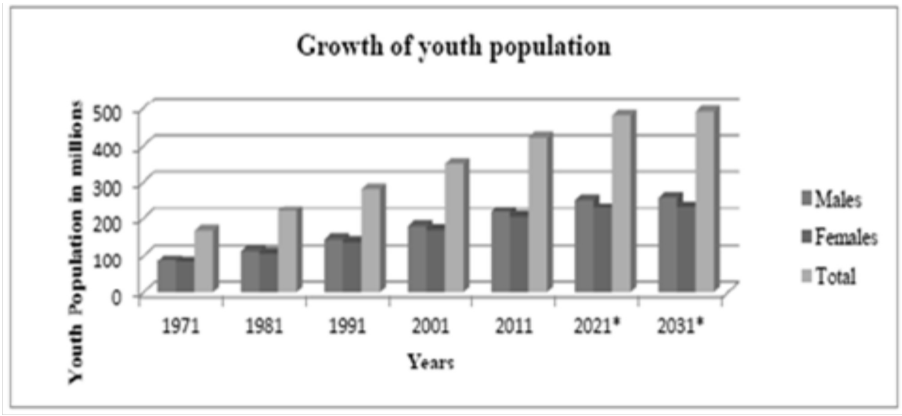
Figure 1: India's Age Structure Transition, 1961-2050



Source: Narayana (2014)

Figure 2 throws light on the prospective trend of youth population that India can boast of. We can see from Figure 2 that even though male and female youth population remained same for the year 1971, there is an absolute increase in the proportion of both male and female youth population since the year 1981. But we can see male youth population gradually outnumbering female youth population, i.e. from 200 million from the year 1981 to near 500 million in 2031 during which time female youth population rose from 100 million to 200 million.

Figure 2: Youth Population and their Share to Total Population



Source: CSO 2017, Youth in India

There are two unique approaches to the estimation of Demographic Dividend. One is called National Transfer Accounts (NTA) approach (Mason et al., 2006) and other is Non-NTA approach. NTA approach demarcates demographic dividend into First Demographic Dividend and Second Demographic Dividend. The period during which, growth of Economic Support Ratio i.e. the ratio of effective producer to effective consumer rises, is called First Demographic Dividend. Support ratios are estimated from the age profile of income and consumption. The second demographic dividend is achieved via productivity growth by kick-starting accumulation of wealth and capital deepening (Mason, 2005b). The second is non-NTA approach, for instance, Bloom et al. (2000) estimated the demographic factors in cross-country regression models by taking into account total population and working age population. Studies in Indian context on Demographic Dividend mainly hinge on non-NTA approach. Navaneetham (2002) regressed the growth rate of GDP on changes in share of population in different age groups with respect to select macroeconomic indicators with a period of study from 1960-1990. James (2008) also estimated the impact of age structure transition on growth rate of per capita income for 15 major states in India, using panel data for census years from 1971 to 2001.

Following Mason (2005a), support ratio may be defined as follows.

$$L(t)/N(t) = \Sigma\gamma(a).P(a,t)/\Sigma\varphi(a).P(a,t)$$

Where $\gamma(a)$ is productivity at age-a (a=1,…..,w) or productivity age profile; $\varphi(a)$ is consumption needs at age-a (a=1,…..,w) or consumption needs age profile; and P(a,t) is population at age-a and time-t.

Table 1 shows that Support Ratio is fluctuating up to the year 2020 and thereafter has declined. That is to say, from 0.723 per cent from 2004-2010,

Table 1: Estimated Impact of Age Structure Transition on Economic Growth of India

Year	Annual Growth of Support Ratio (%)	Annual Growth of per capita Income (%)
2004-2010	0.723	3.73
2010-2015	0.542	3.55
2015-2020	0.567	3.58
2020-2025	0.530	3.54
2025-2030	0.463	3.47
2030-2035	0.371	3.38
2035-2040	0.220	3.23
2040-2045	0.073	3.08
2045-2050	-0.094	2.92

Source: Narayana (2009)

it came down to 0.542 per cent in 2010-2015, but again is expected to increase a little bit to 0.567 per cent. Since then, it is likely to rise up to the year 2040-2045 (0.073 per cent). But, it shows a negative trend during 2045-2050 (-0.094 per cent).

However, it is important to enunciate further about the first and second demographic dividend and also where India stands therein. While the first demographic dividend appears itself in the demographic transition process when the working age population rises as a share of total population, the second demographic transition results from the increase in adult longevity, prompting individuals to inculcate savings habit to brace old age. The first demographic dividend is, therefore, ephemeral as it happens during the demographic transition period. Thereafter, the country confronts an ageing population. Renowned demographers Prof. Andrew Mason and Naohiro Ogawa underscored the significance of the Second Demographic Dividend. That is, the increase in adult longevity escalates the savings behaviour of the younger generation, which, in turn, affects the national savings rate positively, provided GDP is rising. This is in tandem with life cycle hypothesis. To garner the benefits of Second Demographic Dividend, the wealth accumulated by the grey population should be leveraged. However, it is unfortunate that in India, perpetual accomplishment of adult longevity is a far cry. The reason is twofold. One, older generation in India is saddled with disease as well as social security burden. Two, the adult generation is vexed with obesity and second generation diseases. India has, therefore, miles to go in terms of the attainment of Second Demographic Dividend although we have almost reached the zenith of First Demographic Dividend by virtue of proliferating working age population.

3. Health Scenario of India

Ever since the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare released the National Health Policy 2017, discussions on health conditions of Indians gained coinage. It laid accent on the negative impact of malnutrition on the population's productivity and the way malnutrition results in the increase of mortality rates in the country. NITI Aayog, the think-tank of the government, also released the National Nutrition Strategy highlighting four proximate determinants of nutrition viz. uptake of health services, food, drinking water & sanitation and income & livelihoods, which may bring about a decline in under-nutrition in India. Even though NFHS-4 results are, to an extent, satisfactory with regard to a decline in the overall levels of under-nutrition in both women and children, the pace of decline is far from the desirable level vis-a-vis other countries of the world. The Global Hunger Index also lends credence to it.

Malnutrition which is a multi-dimensional phenomenon indicates that children are either too short for their age or too thin. Children whose height

is below the average for their age are considered to be stunted. Similarly, children whose weight is below the average for their age are considered wasted. Together, the stunted and wasted children are considered to be underweight which indicates lack of proper nutritional intake and inadequate care after child birth. On key malnutrition indicators, India's performance is a damp squib. According to UNICEF, India was at the 10th spot among the countries with highest number of underweight children, and at the 17th spot for highest number of stunted children in the world (Loksabha question, 2017).

Malnutrition adversely affects the likelihood of survival for children by increasing their susceptibility to illness, reducing their ability to learn and making them less productive in the years to come. It is estimated that malnutrition is a contributing factor in about one-third of all deaths of children under the age of five. Further, more than half of India's children are anaemic (58 per cent), indicating an inadequate amount of hemoglobin in the blood. This is caused by a nutritional deficiency of iron and other essential minerals, and vitamins in the body (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, 2005-06).

The fact of the matter is that among adults, 23 per cent of women and 20 per cent of men are undernourished in India. On the other hand, 21 per cent of women and 19 per cent of men are obese. This showcases simultaneous occurrence of over-nutrition and under-nutrition portending a dual burden of malnutrition (abnormal thinness and obesity). This implies that about 56 per cent of women and 61 per cent of men are at normal weight for their height (Rao, 2017).

The Global Nutrition Report 2016 depicts India's lackadaisical progress in addressing malnutrition and micro-nutrient deficiencies which manifest themselves in the form of stunting and wasting. In a ranking of countries from lowest to highest on stunting, India ranks 114 out of 132 countries, with the incidence of stunting at 38.7 per cent, as compared with Germany and Chile at 1.3 per cent and 1.8 per cent, respectively. On wasting, India ranks 120 out of 130 countries, at 15.1 per cent, as compared with Australia and Chile at number 1 and 2, with 0 per cent and 0.3 per cent, and South Sudan at 130 with 22.7 per cent. On the prevalence of anaemia in women of reproductive age, India ranks 170 out of 185 countries at 48.1 per cent, as compared with Senegal which is the worst at 57.5 per cent and the U.S. which is the best at 11.9 per cent. So, we add approximately seven million potentially wasted and stunted children to our population every year (Bali, 2016). One of the reasons for the persistent malnutrition in India is the lack of structure of multi-sectoral co-ordination (Ibid).

3.1 Global Hunger Index Report 2018

The Global Hunger Index (GHI) which is prepared on four parameters viz. proportion of under-nourished in the population, prevalence of wasting in children under five years, prevalence of stunting in children under five years,

and mortality rate under five years of age by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) in association with Concern Worldwide and Welthhungerhlife bears macabre testimony to the mis-performing score of India being in 103rd among 119 countries with a GHI of 31.1. The Global Hunger Index stands aloof from other parameters as the formula captured the nutrition situation of children as well, so that we are not oblivious of the vulnerability of citizens of tomorrow. This seminal report reminds us of the unprecedented quality and skill erosion of our demographic dividend. It is because today's children are the progeny of tomorrows. It is appalling to note in the report that the prevalence of child wasting has gone haywire, i.e. from 17.1 per cent in 2000 to 21 per cent in 2018 which is unvaryingly attributed to low maternal BMI and insufficient breastfeeding.

Figure 3: GHI Trend for India

Source: compiled by the author

Table 2 narrates the extremely precarious position of India in terms of GHI with respect to other countries especially Brazil, China, South Africa and Russia who together make BRICS. The most conspicuous reason as to why we fared badly in GHI is due to the disproportionately higher child stunting and wasting. These countries have not outshined India in terms of economic growth but we are worse off than these countries on the basis of nutritional status. India is therefore tagged as one of the 'Fragile Five'.

It is also worth pondering from Table 2 that India's score in female youth literacy rate, improved sanitation and female adult literacy as a percentage of male is lowest whereas in terms of low birth weight the score is highest. What is most disgraceful is that our score is woefully poorer than that of South Africa in terms of female youth literacy, sanitation facility and adult literacy of female. According to World Bank estimates, lack of sanitation facilities cost India over 6 per cent of GDP.

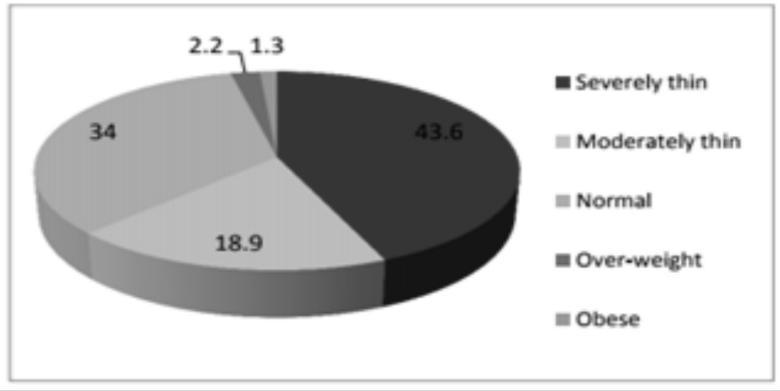
Table 2: India and other Selected Countries

	India	Mexico	Brazil	China	Colombia	South Africa	Russian Federation
Low Birth Weight (%), 2008-12	28	9.2	8.4	3	6	NA	NA
Youth Literacy Rate-Female (%), 2008-12	74.4	98.5	98.3	99.6	98.7	99.2	NA
Adult Literacy of Female as a % of Male (2008-12)	67.6	97.4	100.7	95.1	100.2	98.2	NA
Use of Improved Sanitation Facility (%), 2011	35.1	84.7	80.8	65.1	78.1	74	NA

Source: UNICEF country statistics, 2012

It is appalling to note from Figure 4 that severely thin girls constitute the largest segment (44 per cent), whereas the segment of normal adolescent girls is as trivial as 34 per cent. The 'overweight' and 'obese' adolescents are around 4 per cent, which, though insignificant, is also an indicator of malnutrition.

Figure 4: Nutritional Status of Adolescent Girls

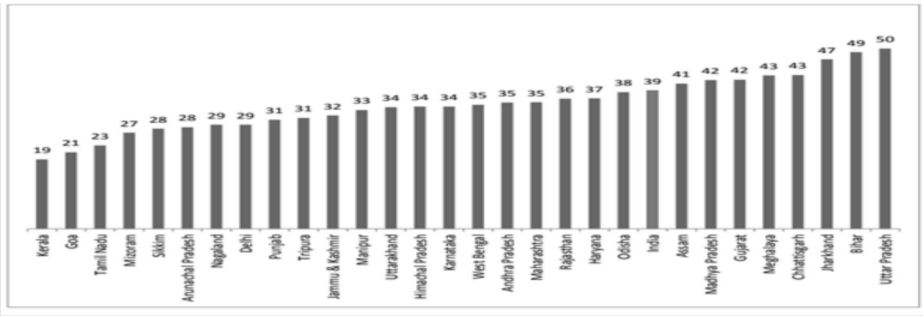


Source: Rapid Survey on Children, 2013-14

It is worth dwelling from Figure 5 that Uttar Pradesh constitutes the largest proportion of stunted children followed by Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and the like, and lowest cases of stunting is reported in Kerala. The low weight of children in proportion to their age is an intractable challenge in the

road to reach demographic dividend. This alarming proportion of stunting naturally obviates the sustainability of dividend.

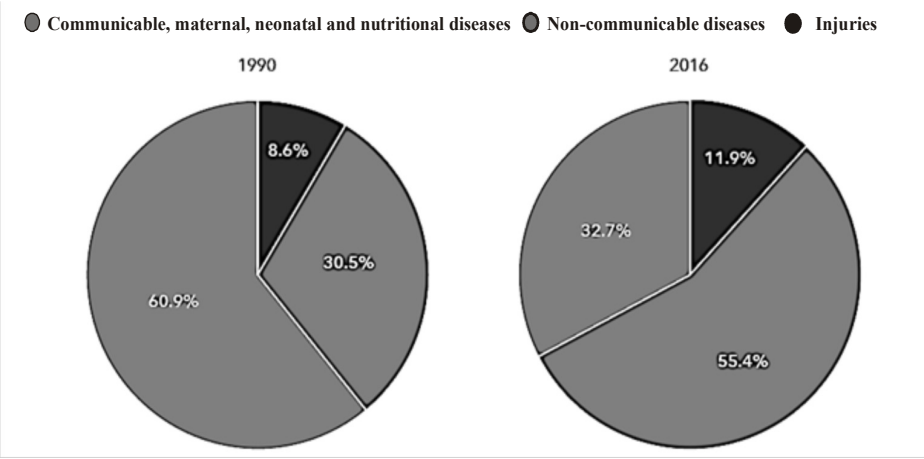
Figure 5: State-wise Stunted Children Aged 0-59 Months in 2013-14



Source: Rapid Survey on Children, 2013-14

It is evidenced from Figure 6 that India had 33 per cent of the total Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) from Communicable Maternal Neo-natal and Nutritional Diseases (CMNNDS), 55 per cent from Non- Communicable Diseases (NCD), and 12 per cent from injuries in 2016. In 1990, this was 61 per cent, 30 per cent and 9 per cent of DALYs respectively.

Figure 6: Contribution of Major Disease Groups to Total Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALYs), 1990-2016



Source: Indian Council of Medical Research (2017)

4. Unemployment Scenario of India

The unemployment scenario of India too provides a grim picture. The estimated labour force participation rate (LFPR) at all India level based on usual principal status approach was 50.3 per cent. Economic Survey, 2016-17, documents that LFPR of female (23.7 per cent) is much lower than

that of male (75.0 per cent) with a wide inter-state variation. In other words, unemployment among female is much higher than male in both rural and urban areas. As development proceeds, there is Lewsian transformation of employment from primary sector to secondary and tertiary sectors. It was so during the period 2011-12 to 2015-16. However, it is startling to note that growth in employment by categories reflects increase in casual and contract worker. This manifests itself the proliferating tendency of casualisation of labour force. This is triggered off by employee-unfriendly labour laws in the formal sector. It may also be noted that employment growth declined to around 0.7 per cent per annum between 2004-05 and 2009-10, and further slowed down to around 0.4 per cent per annum between 2009-10 and 2011-12 (Mehrotra et al., 2014; Shaw, 2013). It is also shocking to reveal that except the case of rural males, all other segments such as rural females, urban females, and males had an absolute decline in employment.

Abraham (2017) using the Employment and Unemployment Survey of National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO-EUS), Quick Employment Survey (QES) and the Labour Bureau's Employment-Unemployment Surveys (LB–EUS) subscribed to the view that it is possible for us to decipher the trends in Indian labour market.

It can be evidenced from Table 3 that largest decline in employment was experienced in primary sector, i.e. a decline of 89 lakh. This decline in

Table 3: Changes in Employment during 2013-14 to 2015-16

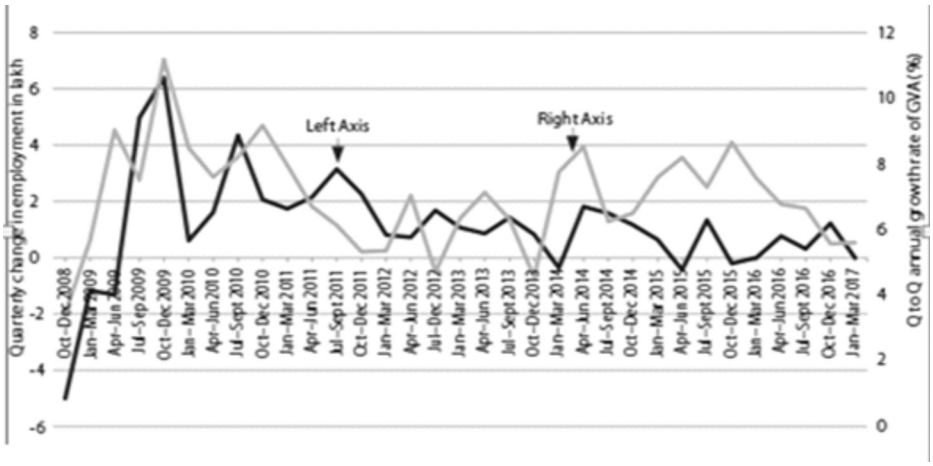
Sectors/Sub-sectors	Rural	Urban	Total
Primary	-81.0	-8.2	-89.3
Electricity, Gas	0.0	-1.6	-1.6
AC, Construction	4.0	-13.2	-9.1
Manufacturing	1.6	-17.4	-15.8
Secondary	5.6	-33.7	-28.1
Wholesale and Retail Trade, Repair of Motor Vehicles and Motor Cycles	29.4	25.2	54.0
Information and Communication	-0.1	-4.9	-5.0
Financial and Insurance Activities	3.0	-3.7	-0.7
Real Estate Activities	3.0	1.1	4.1
Education	11.6	-7.7	3.9
Human Health and Social Work Activities	2.9	-6.2	-3.3
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0.0	-2.9	-2.9
Other Service Activities	-0.2	3.1	2.9
Activities of Households as Employers	-0.1	6.2	6.1
Services	63.5	2.9	66.5

Source: Employment-Unemployment Survey, Labour Bureau, various issues

agricultural employment naturally brings about a decline in female employment and a shifting of male to non-farm sectors. The contribution of secondary sector towards absorption of employment is also bleak as employment growth registered a decline of 28.1 lakh. In the services sector, there was an increase in employment by 63.5 lakh in rural areas, while in urban areas, employment increased by just about 2.9 lakh. The only relief within services sector is that of 'wholesale and retail trade and motor repair'. The absolute fall in employment in construction sector is disastrous as construction sector used to accommodate the labour force thrown out from primary sector.

It can be inferred from Figure 7 that between October 2008 and December 2009, both employment generation and Gross Value Added (GVA) growth had accelerated. Between October 2008 and December 2009, both employment generation and GVA growth had scaled up. From January 2014 to March 2016, the employment additionally created continued to remain flat, realizing "jobless growth." During October to December 2016, employment increased by a tad. However, since January-March 2017, it again nosedived.

Figure 7: Quarterly Change in Employment and Growth Rate of Gross Value Added (GVA)



Source: QES of the Labour Bureau and Press Release of MOSPI, Central Statistical Office, GOI Year

The monthly average of employment creation, during 2010-12 was approximately 76,000 per month (Table 4). During March 2012–March 2014 and March 2014–December 2015, the average monthly employment creation declined to around 26,000 and 30,000 respectively. Within this last period, during March–December 2015, the average employment creation drastically fell to less than 8,000 jobs per month.

Table 4: Change in Employment 2010-15 (in Lakh)

Sectors	March 2010-2012	March 2012-2014	March 2014-December 2015	March 2015-December 2015	Total
Textiles including Apparels	1.88	3.30	2.69	0.48	7.87
Leather	0.17	0.53	-0.18	0.00	0.52
Metals	1.72	-0.07	1.11	0.36	2.76
Automobiles	1.44	0.45	-0.02	-0.28	1.87
Gems & Jwellery	0.23	0.12	-0.09	-0.13	0.26
Handloom	-0.15	0.05	-0.20	-0.09	-0.30
(1) Manufacturing	5.29	4.38	3.31	0.34	12.98
Transport	0.40	-0.11	-0.12	-0.02	0.17
IT/BPO	12.46	1.96	2.73	0.39	17.15
(2) Services	12.86	1.85	2.61	0.37	17.32
Overall	18.15	6.24	5.92	0.71	30.31
Monthly Average	0.76	0.26	0.31	0.08	0.45
CV	0.58	0.68	0.61	0.34	0.67

Source: QES, Labour Bureau

The above analysis resonate the fact that since 2011-12 the labour market in India is grappled with employment growth stagnating in almost all sectors and unemployment rate scaling up drastically. There is, therefore, an absolute decline in employment across sectors for the period 2013-14 to 2015-16. The absolute decline is a very serious as well as a rare phenomenon as it explains three situations in labour market viz a decrease in total employment, falling levels of real capital investment which is symptomatic of recessionary trends gripping the economy.

India Skills Report (2018) highlighted that only 46 per cent of graduates are employable by the Industry while nearly 30 per cent of the 15-29 years age group are not in employment, education or training. Vyas (2018) held that February 2018 ended with highest unemployment rate of 7.1 per cent in the last 15 or 16 months. Lagard and Solberg (2018) maintained that if presence of women in India's labour force is as much as that of men, then the country's GDP would increase by 27 per cent.

5. Neo-Liberalism and Role of Government

Neo-liberalism is a new kind of liberalism backed by rapid globalisation of the capitalist economy. Neo-liberalism is akin to transferring the control of the economy from public to private sector. Neo-liberalism can flourish only in a globalised world and it stipulates public expenditure deflation. In such a

globalisation-induced neo-liberal world, state is a powerless instrument which invariably impacts on employment relations and work arrangements. Not surprisingly, since then, female workforce became the distraught lot. The conditions of women have been disastrous right from the inception of economic reforms in India. Nayar (2001) locates accelerated phase of globalisation guided by resurgent neo-liberal doctrine, a chain reaction of economic globalisation in the developing states during the post world war II period. So far as India is concerned, in response to a mounting burden of debt leading to a Balance of Payment crisis, the Government of India embraced and embarked on Structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) in the 1990s. This included reducing in public investment for the social sector and promoting capital-intensive and 'high-tech' production.

In a neo-liberal world, the State is more interested in attracting capital rather than serving its citizens**.** The role of the government is stooping into being a protector, defender and server and thereby acting as a facilitator to 'Let All Flowers Bloom'. Governments are now less able to respond to the vulnerable and disadvantaged sections of the workforce because revenues are on the decline as taxes and tariffs are getting slashed following neo-liberal drive. One estimate is that one-third of the total tax revenue must have been lost in many countries due to trade liberalisation (Carr and Chen, 2001). The impact has been ruthless particularly to women and children being the most vulnerable in societies as they continue being denied access to the production process which is a regrettable necessity to accumulate wealth in a capitalist society.

In India what has been lashing out for the past two decades is not inclusive or participatory globalisation but a kind of predatory globalisation. It is not the globalisation of working class, but globalisation of finance capital whose survival badly demands the subjugation of many by a few. Let's now examine the discriminatory allocation towards health and education over the years.

Table 5: Expenditure on Health and Education (% of GDP) in Selected Countries, 2008-12

Countries	Education	Health
India	3.7	1.2
Mexico	5.1	2.9
Bolivia	7.1	3.7
Brazil	5.6	4.8
China	NA	2.8
Colombia	4.3	4.4
South Africa	6.0	4.1

Source: UNICEF Country Statistics, 2012

Table 5 compares India with some selected countries on the basis of spending on education and health (as a per cent of GDP). It can be evidenced from the table that India is the country which spent least on health and education in comparison with other six countries. Public expenditure on the most vulnerable sectors viz. education and health is much lower than the developing countries listed in the table. As long as this sort of scant attention is paid to these sensitive sectors portending severe health and education deficits, the accomplishment of dividend projected as shown in Figure 2 is a chimera only.

Table 6: National Education Mission and Government Expenditure

Year	National Education Mission (Rs. crore)	Total Govt. Expenditure (Rs. crore)	Education as a proportion of total budget (%)
2015-16	27066.4	17,90,783	1.51
2016-17	27616.36	19,75,194	1.40
2017-18	29555.67	22,17,750	1.33
2018-19	32612.51	24,42,213	1.34

Source: Budget documents, various years

It is palpable from Table 6 that allocation of money towards National Education Mission, as a proportion of the total budget, has been on the decrease over the years. To be specific, it is evident that, while there is an absolute increase in the proportion of the amount earmarked for National Education Mission from the years 2015-16 to 2018-19, i.e. from 27,066 crore to 32,613 crore, it comes down from 1.51 per cent of the total budget in 2015-16 to 1.34 per cent in 2018-19.

This shows an unconcealed hurry meted out by the doctrine of neo-liberalism that forced the country to weaken itself in its ability to intervene successfully and undertake investments in these sensitive sectors which have a tremendous bearing on demographic bonus.

6. Conclusion

From the above discussion, it is worth pondering that the comfortable cushion meted out by demographic window is only a feel-good perception. We can't afford to fall asleep under the protective umbrella of dividend as long as health and employment conundrums are looming large in the horizon. The statistical jugglery given by the projection of India's Dividend, being the topper in the world in future is only writing on the wall until and unless it is accompanied by skill upgradation, employability and sufficient nutritional intake. It is therefore instructive to note that the extant demographic dividend sans health dividend and employment dividend is more a hype than a happening. The productivity of the available labour force contributing towards effective

workforce is at stake as the productivity is determined by health. This is exacerbated by neo-liberal dispensation which vitiates against increased allocation to health and education sector which is typically a state subject. It bears mentioning that increased young population does not imply increased number of workforce. Workforce can be transformed into reality if and only if there are productive jobs. But having productive jobs depends on having sufficient entrepreneurs which again depends on policies and schemes of the government like 'Ease of Doing Business'. Pity to say, World Bank 2013 report says that India is ranked 173rd on Doing Business in India. The report said that starting a business, takes about 12 procedures, 27 days, and a paid-up capital of 140 per cent of per capita income. But it takes only 7 procedures, 19 days, and 18 per cent of per capita income on average for our neighbours in South Asia. However, as per World Bank ranking, there is an island of hope in the sense that India's score went from 56.05 in doing business in 2017 to 60.76 in doing business in 2018. However, this feat should not remain episodic. Mehrotra and Pratap (2018) held that India could surely become the world's skill capital if the reforms suggested by the Sharada Prasad Committee to rationalize the Sector Skill Councils are implemented in letter and spirit. Currently, one million Indians are entering the workforce every month. What is paradoxical is that we have a bewildering number of schemes such as Make in India, Additional Skill Acquisition Programme, (ASAP) Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan, (RUSA) Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan, Setting up of Higher Education Financing Agency, Multi skill Training Institute, National Board for Skill Development Certification, Entrepreneurship Education and Training Programme, Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion (SANKALP), Skill Strengthening for Industrial Value Enhancement (STRIVE) and the like for fostering skill and acquiring employment. Similarly, for addressing health, hygiene and nutrition issues, schemes such as Swacch Bharat Abhiyan, Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), Mid-Day Meal (MDM), Beti Bachao – Beti Padao, Food Fortification programmes (flour, oil, milk in addition to salt) etc. are also being implemented in full swing. The idea of Universal Health Coverage has been brought to limelight thanks to the announcement during the union budget 2018-19. The mightiest spotlight from union budget 2018-19 is the National Health Protection Scheme. This is a part of Ayushman Bharat project. The two flagship initiatives under Ayushman Bharat are: one being creation of a network of health and wellness centre and two, National Health Protection Scheme.

However, both in employment and health front, the achievements are far from satisfactory. The 2017 Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) reported that around 25 per cent of the youth in the age group of 14-18 years are not able to read basic text in vernacular language. WHO (2014) reports that nearly half the population in India openly defecate on the ground outdoors paving the way for whopping stunting epidemic. Census (2011) reported that

average growth rate of the economy was 7.7 per cent per annum when it was 1.8 per cent for employment. So, we have a double-whammy situation in the sense that, on the one side, children of today who are to become citizens of tomorrow are saddled with disease burden and on the other side, the younger population bereft of sufficient skill and employability are knocking on the doors of labour market. Of this, work participation rate of female is lesser than that of male. This makes dividend a negative one. The complacency over the achievement of First Demographic Dividend without being able to win Second Demographic Dividend does no good at all for India. Increased investment in health and education sectors where we witness preponderance of female labour can generate more employment in these sectors. It is an open secret that the major roadblock that prevents female participation is the bourgeoning burden of domestic responsibilities and care work. A large number of women in India work as unpaid family workers without having any monetary compensation for their work. They are the reserve army of labour who comes in and goes out as and when needed (Sinha and Mehrotra, 2017). These women have to work more, walk more and altogether the unpaid labour of women has increased on a large scale (Ghosh, 2001). The panacea, ergo, lies in having a sound health and employment base on which the population dividend can make its edifice.

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