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Q16

**"Demographic Dividend in India will remain only theoretical unless our manpower becomes more educated, aware, skilled and creative." What measures have been taken by the government to enhance the capacity of our population to be more productive and employable?**

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2016 · GS II · 12 marks · Governance and Policy

Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

**Core demand of the question**

- "Demographic Dividend in India will remain only theoretical unless our manpower becomes more educated, aware, skilled and creative." What measures have been taken by the government to enhance the capacity of our population to be more productive and employable?

**Revision summary**

A young population is a dividend only if it is educated, aware, skilled and creative.

RTE, SSA and RMSA expand schooling; health and literacy missions raise basic capability.

The National Skill Development Mission, PMKVY, NSDC, ITIs and DDU-GKY target employable skills.

NRLM, Digital India and Jan Dhan add awareness, credit and digital access.

Weak learning outcomes and uneven placement mean the dividend is still not automatic.

**Introduction**

A demographic dividend is a spell when the share of working-age people is high and the share of dependents is low. India is in that window, but a young crowd is not a dividend until it can read, stay healthy, learn a skill, and create value. The quoted statement is right: without education, awareness, skill and creativity, the window becomes unemployment and social stress. The Union and the States have built a ladder of schools, missions and skill bodies to make manpower employable.

**Body****Why the dividend stays theoretical without capability**

- Productive work needs literacy, numeracy and the ability to learn a new tool. ASER-type findings of weak grade-level reading show that enrolment alone is not human capital.
- Awareness includes health, rights, finance and digital safety. An unaware worker is easy to cheat in the city and easy to exclude from a scheme.
- Skill is the bridge from a certificate to a wage. Creativity is what lets a worker move from a machine-minding job to a small firm or a new service.

- Without those four, a large labour force only raises the informal, low-wage sector and does not raise output per worker.

### Education and awareness measures

- Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and then the Right of Children to **Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009**, pushed universal elementary schooling, neighbourhood schools and trained teachers as a legal duty.
- Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan aimed to expand secondary schools so that the 14-18 group does not drop out just when the dividend needs them.
- Mid-Day Meal, Kasturba **Gandhi** Balika Vidyalayas, and **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao** attack the girl-child gap, without which half the manpower stays under-used.
- National Literacy Mission / Saakshar Bharat and adult education try to cover those who missed school.
- **Digital India**, Common Service Centres, and financial-inclusion drives (Jan Dhan) raise awareness of banking, identity and public services.
- **National Health Mission, immunisation and ICDS are manpower policy in another name:** a stunted or anaemic youth cannot be a productive worker.

### Skill and employability measures

- The National Skill Development Mission (2015), the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, and the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) were set up to coordinate government and private training.
- Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (**PMKVY**) funds short-term training and certification aligned to the National Skills Qualifications Framework (**NSQF**).
- Industrial Training Institutes, apprenticeships under the Apprentices Act (amended to ease industry intake), and Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana for rural poor youth target different segments.
- **Make in India** and related sector missions try to create the demand side without which trained youth still sit at home.
- National Rural Livelihoods Mission organises women into self-help groups, adding credit, book-keeping and micro-enterprise skill, which is employability outside a factory job.
- Higher education expansion - more IITs, NITs, IIMs and central universities - and the National Mission on Education through ICT aim at the creative and professional end of the manpower ladder.

### Gaps that keep the statement alive

- Placement after **PMKVY** has been uneven; industry often still retrain. Creativity is weakly served if schools test only memory.
- A large informal sector does not always recognise **NSQF** certificates. State vocational boards and employers must sit on the same framework.
- Quality of government schools and ITIs varies sharply by district. The dividend is national; capability is local.

### Join to the quote

- The government's measures are a real architecture of RTE, secondary expansion, skill mission, **PMKVY**, **DDU-GKY**, NRLM and digital-financial inclusion. They make the dividend possible. They do not yet make it automatic, which is why the statement still warns the planner.

### Flow diagram

Demographic dividend -> Educated  
Demographic dividend -> Aware  
Demographic dividend -> Skilled  
Demographic dividend -> Creative  
Educated -> RTE SSA RMSA SSA RMSA  
Skilled -> Skill Mission PMKVY ITI  
Aware -> Digital India Jan Dhan NHM

## Conclusion

The demographic dividend stays theoretical until people are educated, aware, skilled and creative. India has answered with RTE and SSA/RMSA, health and literacy missions, Jan Dhan and **Digital India**, the 2015 Skill Mission, **PMKVY**, ITIs, apprenticeships, **DDU-GKY** and NRLM. The next test is quality of learning, genuine placement, and jobs that use those skills - otherwise the window will close as a crowd, not as a dividend.

## Facts & figures

### RTE Act, 2009

Makes free and compulsory education a justiciable right for children aged 6-14.

### National Skill Development Mission, 2015

Umbrella mission under a dedicated skill ministry to scale training and NSQF alignment.

### PMKVY

Flagship short-term skill scheme with certification, linked to NSDC and sector skill councils.

### NSQF

National Skills Qualifications Framework that grades vocational competence so certificates can be compared.

### DDU-GKY

Rural poor youth placement-linked skill programme under the livelihood ministry's architecture.

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