



Mains Practice Question

Q. In order to realise the benefits of demographic dividend, health is one of the most critical prerequisites. Discuss in light of National Health Policy 2017. (150 words)

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Approach

- Give a brief overview of India's demographic dividend.
- Highlight the importance of health for realising the benefits of demographic dividends.
- Then discuss the key objectives of National Health Policy 2017 and demonstrate how this policy aims to reap the benefits of India's demographic dividend.

Introduction

Demographic Dividend, as defined by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) means, "the economic growth potential that can result from shifts in a population's age structure, mainly when the share of the working-age population (15 to 64) is larger than the non-working-age share of the population (14 and younger, and 65 and older)". At present, the working age group accounts for 62.5% of India's total population. The working-age population will reach the highest proportion of approximately 65% in 2036.

Body

According to UNFPA, countries can only harness the economic potential of the youth bulge if they are able to provide good health, quality education and decent employment to its entire population. Good health remains one of the critical prerequisites in realising the benefits of demographic dividend in India. In this regard, National Health Policy 2017 has been formulated which can facilitate in realising the benefits of India's demographic dividend in the following ways:

- The policy aims to inform, clarify, strengthen and prioritize the role of Government in shaping health systems and all its dimensions such as investments in health, organization of health care services, prevention of diseases and promotion of good health etc.
- It also aims to attain the highest possible level of health and wellbeing for all at all ages through a preventive and promotive health care orientation in all developmental policies, and universal access to good quality health care services without anyone having to face financial hardship as a consequence.
- The policy's objectives of increasing Life Expectancy at birth from 67.5 to 70 and Reducing TFR to 2.1 at national and sub-national level by 2025 have the potential of expanding healthy working age group.
- It also aims to reduce disease prevalence/ incidence such as HIV, Leprosy etc and reduce premature mortality from cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory diseases by 25% by 2025.
- The policy also aims to strengthen the health systems such as health finance, health infrastructure, human resource and Health Management Information System.

Conclusion

Thus, the policy will help in reducing youth vulnerability, improving workforce productivity and creating an environment for youth to realize their full potential. India's demographic dividend can be realised only if our human resources are nurtured well. Increased investment in the health system will bring huge returns in terms of economic gain.

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