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Treat Employment as a National Priority

Context

- As the world's most populous nation and one of its youngest, **India possesses an unprecedented opportunity to harness its demographic dividend.**
- Estimates by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) project that **India will add around 133 million individuals to its working-age population** over the next quarter century, constituting nearly 18% of the incremental global workforce.
- However, **this window of advantage is finite**; the working-age population is expected to peak around 2043.
- **To convert this potential into sustained economic growth, India must prioritise employment generation through coherent, long-term policy frameworks** that promote inclusion, productivity, and resilience.

Employment Generation as the Foundation of Inclusive Growth

- Employment creation is not merely an economic necessity but also **a moral and social imperative.**
- **Quality jobs have the power to lift millions out of poverty**, narrow regional and social disparities, and democratise the benefits of growth.
- In a consumption-driven economy like India's, robust employment serves a dual role: **it strengthens aggregate demand and enhances macroeconomic stability.**
- Employment, therefore, is **both an outcome and a driver of economic progress.**
- Yet, **despite numerous government schemes**, ranging from skill development to social security, **India lacks a unified, national employment framework.**
- **Current approaches remain fragmented** and reactive, **often addressing symptoms rather than structural causes.**

Proposed Policy Framework

- **Towards an Integrated National Employment Policy**
 - An **Integrated National Employment Policy (INEP)** would consolidate existing programs, coordinate between the Centre and States, and **align employment objectives with industrial, trade, education, and labour policies.**

- The **proposed governance model is multi-layered**: an Empowered Group of Secretaries would oversee implementation, while District Planning Committees would address local labour market realities.
- The INEP would set **time-bound targets** and identify **high-employment-potential sectors, ensuring that skilling and educational reforms keep pace** with technological advancements such as Artificial Intelligence and robotics.

• Sectoral Focus: Engines of Employment Growth

- To translate policy into tangible outcomes, there is a need for several **labour-intensive sectors** that can drive large-scale job creation: textiles, tourism, agro-processing, real estate, and healthcare.
- The **Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME)** sector, already employing over 250 million people, emerges as a linchpin in this strategy.
- **Comprehensive support for MSMEs**, including access to finance, technology, and markets, can develop growth with jobs.
- Simultaneously, the **gig economy** as an emerging frontier of employment.
- With current participation between 8–18 million workers and **projections of 90 million by 2030, the gig sector could become a cornerstone of India's labour market** if appropriately regulated.

• Enhancing Job Quality and Inclusion

- Employment quantity must be matched by quality; Better wages, safer working conditions, and reliable social security are prerequisites for sustainable livelihoods.
- **Affordable housing near industrial zones**, for example, can improve worker mobility and productivity.
- Furthermore, **regional balance in employment can be achieved by targeting underdeveloped districts**, promoting rural internships, and expanding remote work opportunities in smaller towns.
- Particular emphasis is placed on **increasing female labour force participation**, which remains a persistent challenge.
- There is **urgent need for a multi-pronged approach: incentivising women's employment** through the **Employment-Linked Incentive (ELI)** scheme, formalising community health and childcare roles such as Anganwadi and ASHA workers, and investing in childcare and eldercare infrastructure.
- Beyond policy, **societal attitudes that constrain women's economic participation must be actively addressed** through awareness and behavioural change campaigns.

The Data Imperative

- The absence of reliable statistics impedes effective policymaking and evaluation.
- To address this issue, **the government should establish a dedicated task force to improve data methodologies**, extend coverage to the informal and rural workforce, and **minimise time lags between data collection and publication**.

- **Data transparency is not merely as a technical issue but as a foundation for accountability** and responsive governance.

Conclusion

- **Employment generation is not an isolated policy challenge** but the central pillar upon which equitable and resilient growth rests.
- **If India can successfully integrate employment priorities** across economic, educational, and technological domains, **it will not only harness its demographic dividend but also redefine its global competitiveness.**
- **India needs a comprehensive blueprint for transforming India's employment landscape,** anchored in long-term policy coherence, sectoral dynamism, social inclusion, and evidence-based governance.

Treat Employment as a National Priority FAQs

Q1. What is India's main demographic advantage?

Ans. India's main demographic advantage is its large and growing working-age population, which can drive global workforce growth and economic development if properly utilised.

Q2. Why is employment generation described as essential for inclusive growth?

Ans. Employment generation is essential because it helps reduce poverty, bridge social and regional gaps, and ensure that the benefits of economic growth reach all sections of society.

Q3. What is the purpose of the proposed Integrated National Employment Policy (INEP)?

Ans. The INEP aims to unify various government schemes, coordinate with States and industries, and align policies to create sustainable, long-term employment opportunities.

Q4. Which sectors are highlighted as key to large-scale job creation?

Ans. Sectors such as textiles, tourism, agro-processing, real estate, healthcare, and the MSME and gig economy sectors are highlighted for their high employment potential.

Q5. How can female labour force participation be improved according to the text?

Ans. Female participation can be improved through incentives like the Employment-Linked Incentive scheme, formalising care work, investing in childcare facilities, and addressing societal barriers to women's employment.

Source: **The Hindu**

India's Direction for Disaster Resilience

Context

- **India, one of the most hazard-prone countries in the world,** faces a growing spectrum of climate-related threats, from heatwaves and extreme rainfall to cyclones, floods, and landslides.

- Over the past decade, India has significantly expanded its disaster risk reduction (DRR) framework, guided by the **Prime Minister's Ten Point Agenda on Disaster Risk Reduction (2016)** and operationalised through the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** and the **National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)**.
- This evolution reflects a strategic shift from a reactive, post-disaster focus toward a holistic system encompassing **prevention, preparedness, mitigation, and resilience building**.

A Paradigm Shift in Financing Disaster Risk Reduction

- A landmark development in India's DRR framework came with the **15th Finance Commission's 2021-26 recommendations**, which integrated financial planning with technological and institutional innovations.
- The Commission allocated **₹2.28 lakh crore (\$30 billion)** over five years, marking a decisive shift from post-disaster relief toward **a balanced approach covering the entire disaster management cycle**.
- The allocation model was carefully structured: **30%** for preparedness and mitigation, divided into **10% for capacity building** and **20% for mitigation measures**, and **70%** for post-disaster response and reconstruction.
- This **represented a significant institutional recognition** that long-term resilience requires investment not just in recovery, but in **risk prevention and systemic strengthening**.

Building a Process Chain for Nature-Based DRR

- To implement this framework effectively, the government established a **budget-to-project process chain** with five priority areas:
- Evaluating and prioritising India's multi-hazard challenges;
- Integrating scientific mitigation and reconstruction concepts into public finance;
- Avoiding duplication with existing programmes;
- Strengthening inter-ministerial and Centre-State coordination; and
- Developing light-touch regulatory mechanisms for efficiency.
- By the final year of the Commission's award period, **clear procedures, standards, and appraisal systems** were in place.

Strengthening Preparedness and Capacity Building

- At the heart of the pre-disaster phase lies India's investment in **preparedness and capacity development**.
- A major portion of this funding, **₹5,000 crore**, has been devoted to modernising fire safety systems.
- Meanwhile, two massive volunteer groups, **Apda Mitra** and **Yuva Apda Mitra**, comprising **5 lakh trained individuals**, have been established to enhance community-level response capacity.
- The **National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM)** has also expanded its role, introducing **geo-spatial training labs, faculty-led research**, and a **standardised 36-stream course** on disaster management.
- These initiatives aim to **mainstream disaster education** down to the panchayat level, ensuring that preparedness becomes an integral part of local governance.

Mitigation through Nature-Based and Technological Innovations

- India's mitigation strategy now increasingly relies on **nature-based solutions (NbS)** and scientific interventions to address the long-term effects of climate change.
- Projects worth **₹10,000 crore (\$1.2 billion)** are being implemented across states, following the successful **National Cyclone Mitigation Programme (2011-2022)**, which reduced coastal vulnerability through cyclone shelters, embankments, and early warning systems.
- The NDMA's ongoing mitigation agenda emphasises:
 - **Revitalising water bodies and green spaces** to reduce urban flooding;
 - **Using remote sensing and automated weather stations** for glacial lake monitoring;
 - **Applying bio-engineering solutions** for slope stabilisation in landslide-prone regions;
 - **Rejuvenating "beels"** (natural water bodies) along the Brahmaputra; and
 - **Creating fire breaks and reviving water systems** to prevent forest fires.
- These measures collectively signal a move toward **ecosystem-based disaster risk management**, which strengthens both environmental sustainability and community resilience.

Enhancing Early Warning and Community Awareness

- India's advancements in **early warning systems** have significantly reduced disaster-related casualties.
- The **Common Alerting Protocol**, which issues regionally tailored multimedia alerts, exemplifies the country's progress in inclusive communication.
- Furthermore, educational initiatives, mock drills, school safety programmes, and public servant training through institutions like the **NDRF Academy**, **National Fire Service College**, and **NIDM**, ensure that awareness and preparedness penetrate all levels of society.

International Leadership and Cooperation

- India's DRR strategy also extends to the global stage.
- As the **founder of the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)** and an active leader in platforms such as the **G20**, **SCO**, **BIMSTEC**, and **IORA**, India not only learns from international best practices but also contributes its own innovations.
- These **collaborations demonstrate India's ambition to be a knowledge hub for climate resilience**, leveraging both public and private expertise to de-risk its complex hazard landscape.

Conclusion

- India's evolving approach to disaster management represents a **transition from reactive relief to proactive resilience**.
- By aligning fiscal policy with science, community engagement, and ecosystem restoration, the nation is building a **sustainable, locally grounded, and globally connected DRR framework**.
- **As climate change intensifies, India's comprehensive model**, combining policy, technology, and nature-based innovation, **offers not only protection for its citizens but also a template for other developing nations facing similar challenges**.

India's Direction for Disaster Resilience FAQs

Q1. What major shift has occurred in India's disaster management approach?

Ans. India has shifted from a reactive, post-disaster relief approach to a proactive system focused on prevention, preparedness, mitigation, and resilience.

Q2. How did the 15th Finance Commission contribute to disaster risk reduction?

Ans. The 15th Finance Commission allocated ₹2.28 lakh crore over five years to strengthen all phases of disaster management, including preparedness, mitigation, response, and reconstruction.

Q3. What role does the National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) play?

Ans. The NIDM develops training, research, and documentation on disaster management and aims to integrate disaster preparedness into local governance and education.

Q4. How is India using nature-based solutions in its mitigation strategy?

Ans. India promotes nature-based solutions like restoring water bodies, stabilising slopes with bio-engineering, and rejuvenating wetlands to reduce disaster risks and enhance climate resilience.

Q5. What is India's role in international disaster risk reduction efforts?

Ans. India leads global initiatives such as the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure and actively contributes to DRR discussions in forums like the G20 and BIMSTEC.

Source: **The Hindu**

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