



# **“The Paradox of Youth Unemployment in India: Education, Aspirations, and the Crisis of Jobless Growth”**

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## **ABSTRACT :**

Even while India has demonstrated fast economic expansion, the problem of unemployment among its young people persists unrelentingly. Although GDP growth has risen since the 1980s, job creation—including well-paid, stable jobs—has not kept up and many young Indians are unable to find meaningful work. Shortages of education, mismatches of skills, and structural economic reforms skewed toward capital-intensive sectors at the expense of labor-intensive sectors drive the crisis. The COVID-19 epidemic has exacerbated these problems even more, especially among unemployed young people suffering with mental health issues including anxiety, sadness, and low self-esteem. Broader social consequences such as rising crime, brain drain, and social unrest highlight the need for action. Ending this catastrophe calls for a multi-pronged approach including mental health treatment, vocational training, educational reform, and entrepreneurial incubation. Lack of bringing about systematic change will cause India to squander its demographic dividend with long-term consequences for social cohesion and economic stability. Important words: Youth Unemployment, India, Jobless Growth, Education, Aspirations, Economic Growth, GDP Growth, Employment Generation, Skill Mismatch, Structural Reforms, Capital-Intensive Industries, Labor-Intensive Industries, COVID-19 Pandemic, Mental Health, Anxiety, Depression, Low Self-Esteem, Crime, Brain Drain, Social Unrest, Education Reform, Vocational Training, Entrepreneurship, Demographic Dividend, Economic Stability, Social Cohesion.

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## **INTRODUCTION :**

Over the last few decades, India's economic narrative has been one of paradox. Though the country has experienced rapid GDP growth, particularly for its young people the growth has not been adequate to create enough job possibilities. Youth unemployment keeps declining and more than 90% of India's 470 million workers are trapped in low-waged, unstable informal jobs.

This catastrophe has deep-seated roots. Education systems create graduates who are unmarketable, labor laws and economic policies favor automation and capital over human labor, and so on. The COVID-19 epidemic highlighted these flaws even more and drove people into financial misery and mental suffering. Unemployed young people not only suffer financial hardship but also social shame, isolation, and aimlessness—issues that underlie more general societal unrest, including more crime and political unhappiness. Examining its structural causes, psychological consequences, and more general socioeconomic ramifications, this paper investigates the multi-dimensional phenomenon of youth unemployment in India. Drawing on existing studies and policy gaps, it recommends an integrated approach—one that combines education reform, skill development, mental health care, and fair economic policy—to turn India's demographic dividend into a promise rather than a time bomb in the making.

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## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE :**

### **1. The Growth-Employment Paradox**

Different studies highlight the puzzling difference between India's GDP growth and job creation. Basole et al. (2021) argue that post-liberalization economic reforms concentrated on capital-intensive sectors, so producing jobless growth. While services and IT industries expanded, manufacturing, which was formerly a mass employer, reached a standstill wall, sending tens of millions into unstable informal sector work, according to Mehrotra & Parida (2019). With most young workers having unstable incomes and no social protections, the expansion of gig economy work has exacerbated job insecurity even more (Srivastava, 2022).

### **2. Education-Skill Mismatch**

A recurring topic in the studies is how well India's education system meets the labor market needs. Though more people are literate, Chakraborty & Jha (2020) find many graduates are unemployed-ready and only accept low-skilled or non-relevant jobs. There is little vocational training; formal skill training is provided to just 5% of India's labor force in contrast to 60-90% in industrialized countries (World Bank, 2021). The disparity makes young people ready for unemployment for a changing economy.

### **3. Social and Mental Consequences of Unemployment**

Unemployment's psychological impact is known. Increased anxiety, sadness, and even suicidal ideas among Indian youth, Patel et al. (2023) say, are caused by societal pressure to succeed driving prolonged unemployment. Economic reliance on families brings shame; social exclusion diminishes self-

esteem (Deshpande, 2022). From a macro perspective, this anger manifests as political disillusionment and rising crime rates (Kannan & Raveendran, 2021).

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## CONCLUSION :

Emphasizing young unemployment as a complicated, systematic problem that calls for quick, group action, this paper Though economic change and educational policy are important, so is recognizing and dealing with the human cost—mental health, social cohesion, and lost potential. Otherwise, India might turn its youth bulge into a catastrophe.

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