



UDTA PUNJAB: IT'S NOW OR NEVER

Meenakshi Duggal

Associate Professor, Department of Economics, RRB DAV College for Girls, Batala, Punjab, India.

ABSTRACT

Punjab is a rich state with not only the minimum hunger reports but also the maximum working population. Entering into the phase of demographic transition, it is now one of the young states of India. The region has maximum number of young consumers in the field of education, communication and other amenities of life. The state is giving a turn to the fashion industry, entertainment industry and the tourism industry also. With changing party cultures and a high count of NRIs, the state is turning into the hub of food resorts and tourist spots of national and international standards. The young demographic dividend in this case should become the first concern of the policy makers. Otherwise too, this youth turn to make or mar the future of the state political parties, being the newly added voters in this election. Above all, this human resource is a major power if utilized properly or this demographic dividend can be demographic disaster.

KEYWORDS: Education, Fashion Industry, Consumers, Green Revolution, Technology,

INTRODUCTION

Punjab is the cradle of one of the most prosperous races in India. The Punjabis are known for their adventurous and innovative approach to life. The lifestyle of people of Punjab is spicy. While the Punjabis are known for their strong determination, their culture presents a multi-hued heritage of ancient civilizations. It is situated in the northwest region of India. It is bounded on the west by Pakistan, on the north by Jammu and Kashmir, on the northeast by Himachal Pradesh and on the south by Haryana and Rajasthan. Punjab experiences both summer and winter to its extreme. It even receives abundant rainfall, which makes the state a very fertile land. The region lying near the foot hills of Himalayas receive heavy rainfall whereas the region lying at a distant from the hills, the rainfall is scanty and the temperature

is high. Punjab is a land which owes the credit of green revolution in agriculture. It is one of the most ancient civilizations in the world with a distinguished culture. Punjabi language has its origins in the Indo-European family of languages which included Persian and Latin. A land of ethnic and religious diversity, it is birth place of a number of religious movements. Its diversity and uniqueness is evident in its poetry, philosophy, spirituality, education, artistry, music, cuisine, science, technology, military warfare, architecture, traditions, values and rich history.

Punjab, a name given to the state from Persian dialect means "Five Rivers", a land of five rivers the Sutlej, Beas, Ravi, Chenab and Jhelum. This name was given to the region by Maharaja Ranjeet Singh. Situated in



Northwestern India, it has a boundary on the west shared with Pakistan, on the north with Jammu and Kashmir, on the northeast with Himachal Pradesh and on the south with Haryana and Rajasthan.

Punjab has twice gone through the agony of divisions. During the British rule it was partitioned along religious lines into West and East Punjab and secondly it was divided along linguistic basis in 1966. On the first of November 1966, the Hindi-speaking southern half of Punjab became a separate state, Haryana, and the Pahari speaking hilly areas in north east were given to Himachal Pradesh. During the 1970s, the Green Revolution brought increased economic prosperity for the Punjab. The area of Punjab after this phase was clearly parted into three major regions, Majha, Doaba and Malwa. Majha is the 'Cradle of Sikhism', Doaba, the region of two rivers Beas and Sutlej ("Do" two, "Ab" river) is one of the most fertile regions of the world and was the center of the Green Revolution in India and Malwa a famous region for cotton farming. Punjab has the minimum share of poor and the lowest level of hunger in India. The urbanization index has also effected the life in the state. Within 22 Districts there are nearly 237 towns and cities in Punjab. Major cities of Punjab include Mohali, Ludhiana, Amritsar, Patiala and Jalandhar.

OBJECTIVES

This study involves the analysis of the following aspects in Punjab.

- To examine the pattern of age structure and its differentials leading to the formation of demographic dividend of Punjab
- To examine the rural and urban divide on demographic dividend of Punjab

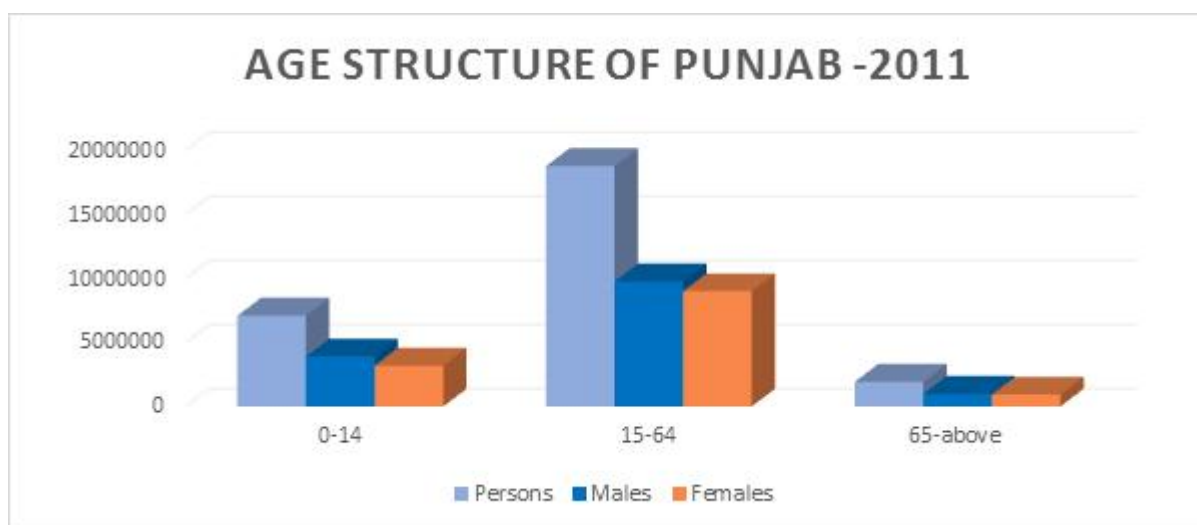
- To examine the approach to literacy on demographic dividend of Punjab
- To find out the various measures to improve demographic dividend through closely connected indicators in Punjab.

METHODOLOGY

The age structure of Punjab is examined with the population pyramids and the census analysis with percentages and proportions. The study totally depends on the secondary data by Government of India in census reports of 2001 and 2011

The population of the state is on a rise continuously since 1961. Even though it has gone through a trauma of terrorism and border area troubles the population in Punjab has increased to a normal rate as in any other states or even more. During the time of partition of India and Pakistan, Punjab had the negative growth rate of (- 4.5%). Later on the population of 0.91 millions increased to 111 millions in the next decade of 1961. On the other hand, Punjab being an agro based economy and land remaining the major source of survival and status, the boy child rather a girl child was a preference. The Punjabi society continues to place a premium on the male child which ultimately led to low sex ratio in the state which is now improved to 893 in 2011 from 876 in 2001. The status of female has increased with the female literacy and work participation rate in the state. The indicator thus shows the decline in support ratio from 61% to 48%. With the Infant mortality rate decreasing in the state to 30.3 and subsequently fertility rate showing a major decline to 1.7, the working group is on the rise.

Figure 1



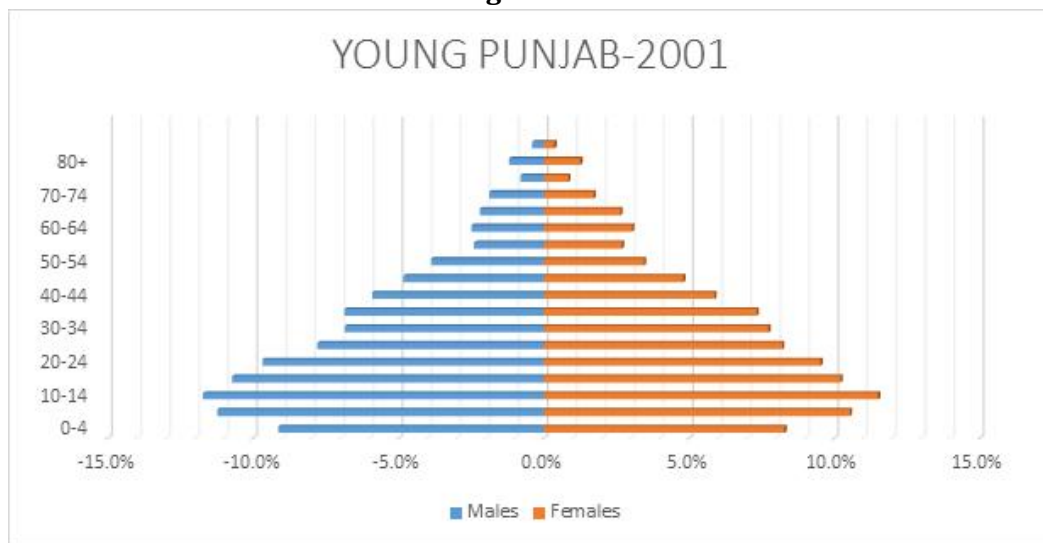
Source: Census of India 2011

At present, the population of Punjab is 277 million with a 13.8% decadal growth in 2011. The state has 76.7% of literacy and a continuously rising urbanization index up to 37.49% from 27.6% in 1981, 29.5% in 1991 and 33.95% in 2001. The tendency of urbanization is higher in Punjab than in India. The rural and urban divisions also form the life style of the state. The state has a 61.7% youth residing in rural areas with less amenities skill and employment this is the unexplored treasure of the state which needs the dire attention of the governments. The concern of the study is the age group of working population (15-64) which is at present making Punjab one of the

largest Young Markets in India. Punjab is a housing 187 million of young population which is 67.6 % of the total. In 2001 the proportion of this section was 62.1%.

Passing through the phase of demographic transition, the decade of 2001 showed the maximum count of teens in the state with 11.6% in the total population. This segment needed maximum numbers of schools, health centers with all vaccinations and childhood amenities taken care of by the administration. Within the decade of 2001-2011, it has grown to be the demographic dividend of Punjab.

Figure 2

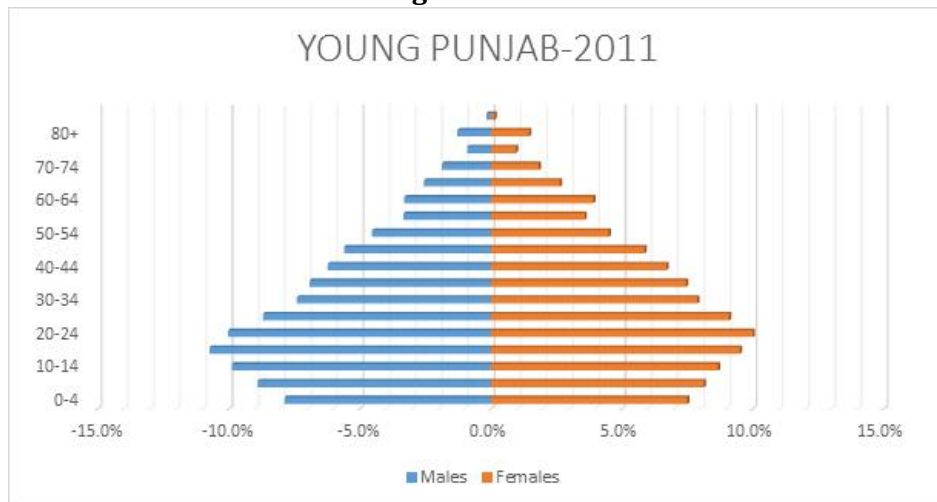


Source: Census of India 2001

Now Punjab has entered into the phase of maximum count of young age group. This segment of 15-19 is more than 10% in the total population of Punjab counting to approximately 28 lakhs out of which 64.6% of this segment is residing in rural areas of the state. The reach of this working population group to the educational institutes of any type is only 91% while the advanced data

calculates the group reaching to the higher education is only 27.6%. The destiny of the state lies more in the steps which are required to be taken to take this group of population into technical education where the state is extremely lacking with only 5.2% of the population of the state vocationally trained.

Figure 3



Source: Census of India 2011

The major concern of the political parties is having maximum number of new voters in the coming elections. The industry has maximum count of new young consumers and for education industry the maximum new enrolments in higher education segment. Punjab is in a flying mode of economic development now, which we consider as the take off stage.

The policy makers of Punjab need to take care of the qualitative steps regarding the education system right from the root to the top. Secondly, a very clear cut action should be taken to the health hazards effecting the youth of Punjab. Thirdly, the youth of Punjab need to be secured against all odds for a safe and secure employment in the state. The curbing segment from 2001 to 2011 is the segment between 24 to 28 and 32 which is a proof of migration of skilled brains or labor from Punjab. But on the other hand the return of NRIs with investments in the state can be a source of employment which the policy makers need to take care of. If Punjab lose the demographic dividend to the other countries of the world, it has the future of losing its cultural heritage also. The retaining of the dividend in the state itself is not an easy task for the state policy makers.

CONCLUSION

Punjab is in the stage of enjoying the fruit of skill and efficiency in the field of industry, agriculture and infrastructure. The youth of Punjab has a mode of flying to the open pastures in the world with tendency to be more adventurous and innovative. This phase is of great concern from both dividend and disaster point of view, taking steps on thoughtful lines as soon as possible. The state government need to take immediate steps to frame a strong policy to take care of its demographic dividend. The opportunity window of Uda Punjab should not be neglected.

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