

Youth in South Africa and India: Is it really bulging or contracting?

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Introduction

Developing countries like India and South Africa still have higher proportions of young population owing to higher levels of fertility and advances in child survival. These countries are expected to experience a youth bulge. Youth bulge is a condition used to describe a population in which the proportion of young people is significantly large (in excess of 20%) between the ages of 15 and 24 relative in comparison to other, older age groups [1].

It is foreseen that a greater proportion of educated and employed young population would lead to inevitably fruitful demographic dividend at the horizon [2]. However, there are some hindrances in this process since; demographic dividend is not triggered automatically alone by the youth bulge, rather it is directed through a series of actions taken by the government in the form of policies and programs to channelize its youth in terms of better education and employment opportunities [3]. But over time there has been a reduction in the population and fertility rate of these countries. Therefore this study tries to assess the situation and trend of youth bulge in South Africa and India.

Data and Methodology

Present study uses data from US Census Bureau to estimate the proportion and trend of youth in the workforce in South Africa and India during 1991-2011. Workforce includes both males and females of age group 15-64 years. To assess youth bulge young men and women aged 15-24 years were considered. Then share of youth aged 15-24 years in working age population was calculated.

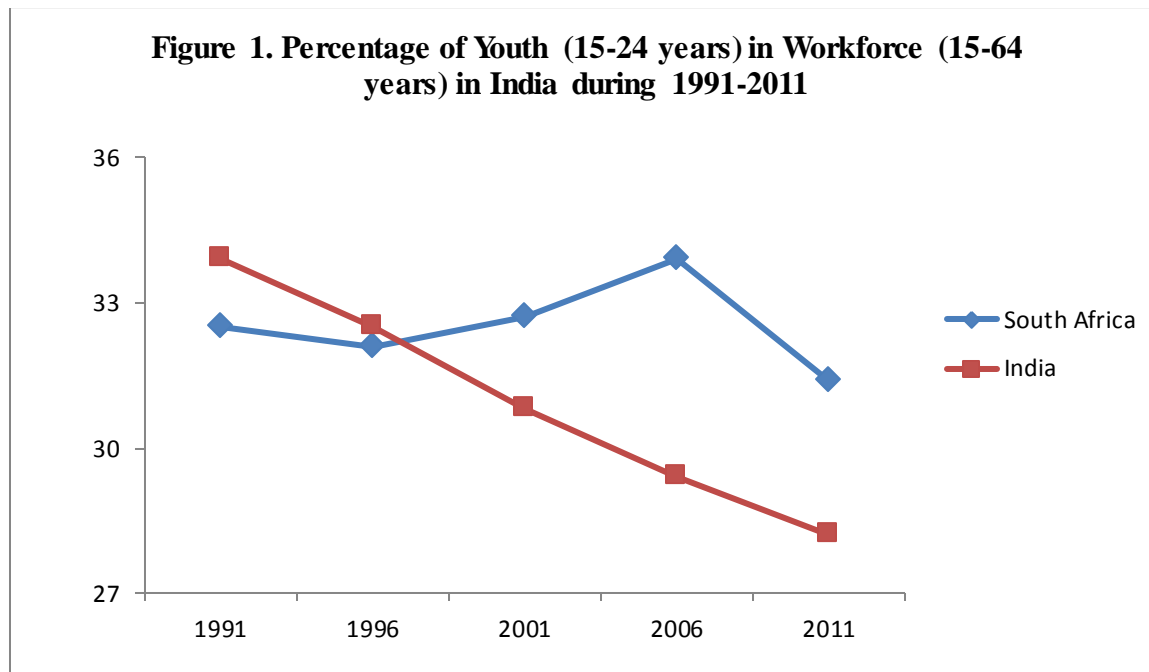
Results

Table 1 shows the youth population aged 15-24 years and working age population i.e. 15-64 years in South Africa and India during 1991- 2011. It is seen that the population of youth has increased over time.

Table 1. Workforce and Youth Population in South Africa and India from 1991 to 2011.

Year	South Africa		India	
	15-64 years	15-24 years	15-64 years	15-24 years
1991	23064323	7487811	509061692	172398690
1996	25560856	8212615	572436228	186053475
2001	28330211	9276496	637143679	196532407
2006	31696042	10734478	703190000	206409232
2011	34017830	10691005	771476710	217384928

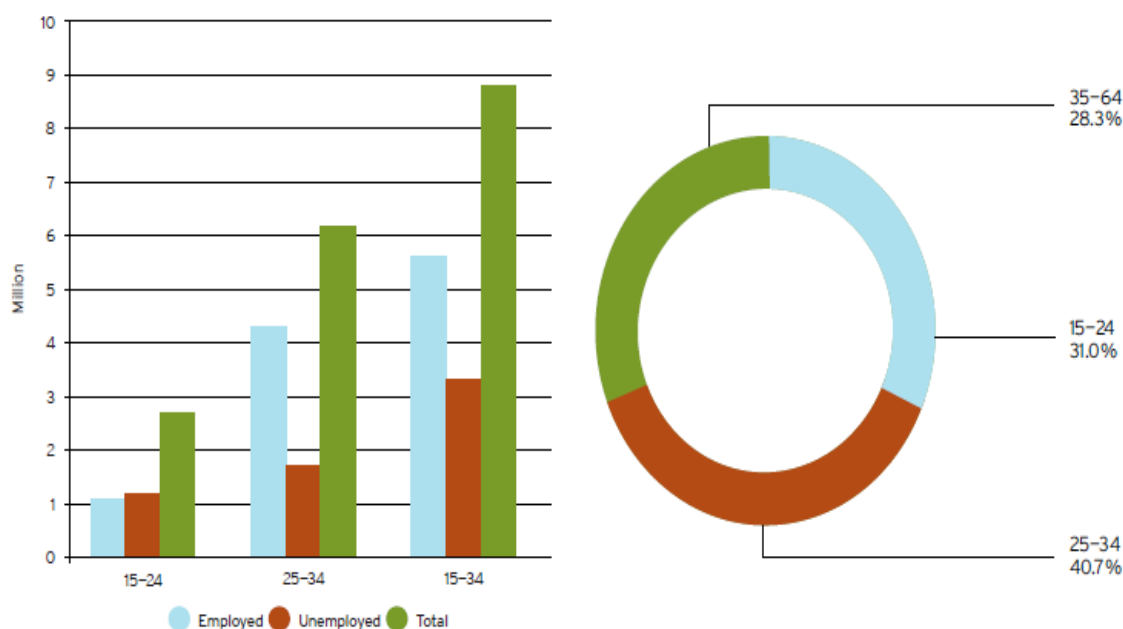
Source: US Census Bureau



Source: US Census Bureau

Figure 1 illustrates the proportion of youth in workforce of South Africa and India during the year 1991-2011. It can be seen that in South Africa share of youth in the workforce has increased from 32.5% to 33.9% from 1991-2006. However, the proportion of youth has dropped down to 31%, even lower than the level of 1991. On the contrary, in case of India the proportion of in workforce has declined by 6 percentage points during 1991 to 2011. It has declined from 34% during 1991 to only 28 percent in 2011.

Unemployment: A big curse



Source: Stats SA (2010).

Statement 6.1: Unemployment rates (per 1000 persons/person-days in the labour force) according to usual status, current weekly status (CWS) and current daily status (CDS) during 2011 - 2012

status	all-India					
	unemployment rate					
	rural			urban		
	male	female	person	male	female	person
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
usual status (ps)	21	29	23	32	66	38
	(12)	(5)	(8)	(18)	(9)	(14)
usual status (adjusted)	17	17	17	30	52	34
	(10)	(4)	(7)	(17)	(8)	(13)
CWS	33	35	34	38	67	44
	(18)	(8)	(13)	(22)	(10)	(16)
CDS	55	62	57	49	80	55
	(29)	(11)	(20)	(27)	(11)	(19)

Note: Figures within bracket indicate the proportion of unemployed per 1000 persons/person-days.

Source : employment unemployment survey India 2011-12

Discussion

Our study clearly shows that although the population of youth in workforce has been rising during 1991 to 2011 but the proportion of youth in the workforce has slowly declined over time. Declining proportion of youth can be a backdrop in reaping the demographic dividend. It has also been seen that the median age of population in both the nations is gradually increasing and will reach around 35 years by 2050 [6].

So the time is less and a lot more is needed to be done before the aging further progresses. Unemployment has to be tackled since it is a big curse for youth especially in South Africa [4]. It indicates that government has to make additional efforts to harvest the promising demographic dividend. This makes it clear that in South Africa and India as well the youth is not rather it is shrinking with time.

References

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