



Jain University's international conference decodes the demographic dividends of India

India is a nation of young people driven by dreams and aspirations. The average age of an Indian citizen is expected to be twenty-nine in the year 2020. The economic progress of the nation is dependent on this young population and the young and ambitious Indians will definitely aid the nation in making rapid strides towards economic prosperity and stability. However, do we have the educational resources, basic infrastructure, and political will power to drive the nation forward in the right direction? Jain University conducted an international conference on this pertinent topic recently. **The two-day seminar conducted by School of Commerce Studies, Jain University, discussed at length the key issue: "Demographics - Dividend or Disaster?"**

Eminent academicians, research scholars, faculty members and students from various institutions were present at the conference. The inaugural address was delivered by Dr. N Sundararajan, Vice Chancellor, Jain University. Dr. A Ravindra, Former Chief Secretary, Govt. of Karnataka, and Chairman, Smart Cities India Foundation, delivered the Keynote address on "The Demographics Dividend – How 'Youngistan' can become an Asset for India? Lessons from other countries' experiences.

A special address by Dr. Charan Singh, Visiting Faculty of IIM-B and advisor to RBI, was one of the major highlights of the conference. **"The culture that we have in our country, the Gurukul system, frowns upon the student who questions the teacher. What I have learned from my experiences as a teacher is: no question is unworthy if it comes to your mind,"** he said, speaking to the young minds in the audience. Dr. Charan stressed on the fact that India's educational expenditure needs to go up drastically to meet the demographic challenges in the future. "While the world suffers a 56 million shortage in workforce, we will have 47 million youth in our country," he added, suggesting the advantage India has over other countries in the world.

The conference witnessed numerous debates deliberating on the advantages and disadvantages of having such a huge population. Dr. Sari S A Mattila, Visiting Faculty, IIMB spoke on "Demographics and Empowerment of Youth". Prof. R. Lakshminarayanan, Co-founder and Chief Learning Officer, iNurture Education Solutions Pvt. Ltd. spoke on "Demographics and Education." Many doctoral research papers were also presented in the parallel sessions conducted at the conference.

Let us hope that this conference will trigger the minds of a young India to deliberate on its demographics.