



## A Study on Employment Generation in India: Opportunities and Challenges

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### ABSTRACT:

Sustaining a balance among population growth, labor force, and employment generation is challenging for a developing country. It is possible only through productive economic policies and their effective implementation to strengthen the country. This study descriptively analyzes the employment status (i.e., Labor Force Rate, Employment Rate, Unemployment Rate) and economic growth (GDP Growth) in India with the help of information collected from different sources like the Economic Outlook database, CEIC database, MOSPI database, RBI database, etc. The entire study found better growth in employment generation in the post-reform period as compared to the pre-reform period and in the recent past, all above-said rates are highly imbalanced due to the lockdown during COVID-19. However, in the current situation, India is quite stable but has to make a balance between the growth of the population, a balanced investment in rural as well as urban, and the generation of employment with a special preference for the rural sector. The country should use the unprecedented health and economic crisis to truly build a new social contract, it is a commitment to India @ 75 (Azadi Ki Amrit Mahotsav).

**KEY WORDS:** Labor Force Rate, Employment Generation, GDP Growth

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### I. INTRODUCTION:

India is the second most populated country with the second largest labor productivity in the world. With the second largest productivity, India should economically grow with the creation of adequate income for the labor force. For the generation of income source of the labor force, the concerned ministry of the country should not only make new policies in changing environment but also should review and amend its existing policies as per need to generate good quality and quantity of jobs consistently.

According to International Labor Organization (ILO), the indicators that measure an economy's ability to generate sufficient employment opportunities for its population can provide valuable insights into the economy's overall development performance. These indicators include unemployment rates, the employment to population ratios, labor force participation rates, and the growth of employment with respect to output i.e., how much employment growth is associated with a 1% point of economic growth.

The recent pandemic has devastated the livelihood of people at large in the world. As a highly populated country, India also suffered a lot to escape from the massive disaster situation. Usually, the survival of the people in India depends upon the sources of income they earned. India is a labor and employment-oriented country. The employment opportunities in India are debatable concern always i.e., during COVID-19 and pre-pandemic periods. Basole (2022), found the weakest relationship between economic growth and employment generation and still has even. In recent, the recovery of the gap in the generation of employment in India during COVID-19 and post-COVID-19 become a big challenge.

The economy of India is facing a declining elasticity of employment forever due to the low rate of labor force participation in the productivity of the country. For that reason, the labor market is facing problems and hampering the country's economic growth. The outputs are high levels of informality and unemployment and high levels of open unemployment among skilled youth (Basole, 2022).

The study is based on the theoretical observation of the relationship between employment creation and economic growth in India. The current study widely appreciates checking the opportunities and challenges of employment in India descriptively. Also, try to explain the status and relationship among Labor Force Rate (LFR), Employment Rate (ER), Unemployment Rate (UER), and GDP growth in India.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The current study imbibes through existing literature, are:

According to **Tewari (1998)** has studied the income and employment generation opportunities and potential of non-timber forest products (NTFPs). The study found that NTFPs generate on average employment equal to 3.7 million man-days and an income of Rs 62.7 million per annum. Moreover, many NTFPs are collected for household consumption and provide food security to several people. Again, **Joshi (2004)** studied the impact of tertiary sector-driven growth on employment and poverty in India during the period from 1950 to 2000. The study considers to the association between employment and GDP. The descriptive study found an appropriate development strategy in the tertiary sector with the commodity-producing sector to overcome the problem of unemployment and poverty alleviation.

According to **Kalirajan and Singh (2009)**, have studied the impact of Globalization on employment generation in India with special reference to 'Big Shopping Malls and Retailers. The study is based on the primary data of 800 malls and 2000 retailers throughout the country from both organized and unorganized shops. By employing regression analysis, it is found unorganized retail in most of the states except Karnataka felt a threat to survival. However, organized retails play an importance in employment generation in both rural as well as urban areas. **Thomas (2014)** descriptively explored the demographic challenges and employment growth in India during the period from 2004-05 to 2011-12. By adopting trend analysis, the study found only the employment generation inadequate to meet demographic challenges, and the men of urban people found a disproportionate share of high-productivity employment in India during the period.

Again, **Mehrotra (2014)** studied on explaining employment trends in the Indian economy during 1993-94 to 2011-12. By using National Sample Survey unit-level data, the study found a structural transformation with an absolute fall in agricultural employment and a rise in non-agricultural employment, increasing participation in education, the decline in child labor, and, mechanization of agriculture has a great influence on the economic growth of the country. **Rajeevan et al. (2015)** studied the critical role of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises in employment generation in India. The result of the study found that unregistered enterprises generate more than 80% of employment. By computing the Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) in the MSME, it is found the growth of the post-reform period is higher than the pre-reform period.

Further, **Bharathi (2016)** studied descriptively the relationship between the Sericulture Industry and Employment generation in India. By elaborating on different scenarios and trends of Sericulture and employment, the study found start-ups in Sericulture is a better scope to generate employment in India. **Saha (2019)** studied the rural employment generation in India through the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) in 2005. The study used primary data collected from rural villages in Rajasthan state. The outcome of the current study confirms the finer enumeration criteria and methods, rather broad-based caste-focused analysis, may be employed with many benefits in every village of every state to assess the grass root level impact of NREGA.

**Mishra and Palit (2020)** have studied the role of FDI inflow on employment in India during the period from 1991 to 2018. FDI inflow and employment generation data is collected from different sources like the World Bank, RBI, Economic Survey of India, Director General of Employment, and Ministry of Labor and Employment. The outcome of the study found FDI inflow may not be regarded as a major factor for employment generation in India. **Datta and Sahu (2021)** examined the role of microcredit in the employment generation and empowerment of rural women in India. The study considers 350 borrowers in West Bengal. The methods like regression, t-test, and F-test have been applied to observe the significant difference. Microcredit utilization helps borrowers to start-up income generating activities and engagement of manpower within their household and beyond.

Moreover, **Panda (2021)** descriptively analyzes the relationship between unorganized entrepreneurship and employment generation in India. The increasing workforce and lack of employment opportunities is the root cause of unemployment in India. To overcome the problem, individuals come for entrepreneurship in unorganized sectors to encourage potential entrepreneurs for setting up businesses in different regions of India.

## III. OVERVIEW OF EMPLOYMENT SCENARIO AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

The growth perception of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in India is the highest i.e., 8.9% (Silver et al., 2022) in the world. In the current situation, the economy of India is growing rapidly. The average growth of Real GDP from Jun 2005 to Jun 2022 is 7.3% in India (CEIC, 2022). In the recent past, the GDP growth rate was extremely low i.e., -23.8% in Jun 2020. However, it reached its highest just after one year i.e., 20.1% in Jun

2021(MOSPI, 2022). The GDP growth rate was expanded to 13.5% in the first quarter of 2022 which was a 4.1% growth as compared to the previous quarter. From the prior history of GDP growth of post-liberalization, the average GDP is 6.17%. In the year 2020, the annual growth rate is -6.6% which is the lowest after the liberalization due to the COVID-19 situation, and also -10.33% changes during the year. However, it was recovered in the year 2021 and the annual GDP growth rate become 8.95% which is the highest after post-liberalization till 2021, and also the highest annual change i.e., 15.54% recorded during 2020-21.

#### IV. FREQUENCY TREND OF GDP GROWTH

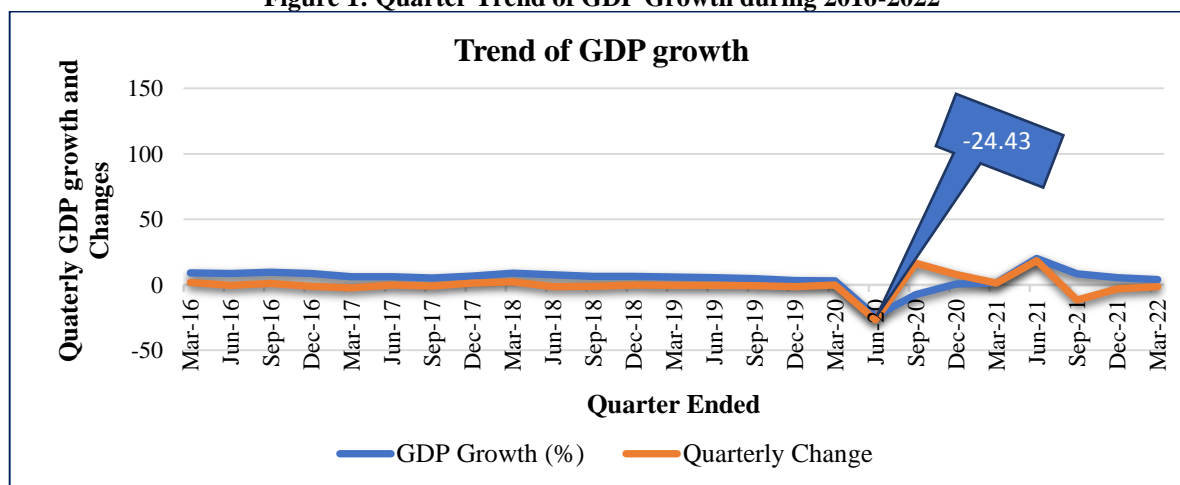
Tableno. 1 and figure 1 depict the quarterly growth of GDP during the year from Mar 2016 to Mar 2022. During the last few years, it is found that the average quarterly growth of GDP is 4.8% which is very low and is affected by COVID-19. However, the quarterly average, excluding the COVID-19 period, is found 6.49%. Due to the nationwide lockdown effect, in the quarter that ended Jun 2020 (Q<sub>1</sub>), the growth rate declined to -24.43%. Despite this, the economic growth of the country revived and the GDP growth rate slowly recovered. In Jun 2021, it makes a wide jump and recorded 20.13% which was also the highest growth after the reform of the economy. However, the growth rate in GDP makes a balance and declines in subsequent quarters.

**Table 1: Trend of quarterly changes in GDP Growth from 2016 to 2022**

Quarter Ended	GDP Growth (%)	Quarterly Change	Quarter Ended	GDP Growth (%)	Quarterly Change
Mar-16	9.09	1.89	Jun-19	5.39	-0.45
Jun-16	8.68	-0.41	Sep-19	4.61	-0.78
Sep-16	9.67	0.99	Dec-19	3.28	-1.33
Dec-16	8.58	-1.09	Mar-20	3.01	-0.27
Mar-17	6.29	-2.29	Jun-20	-24.43	-27.44
Jun-17	6.11	-0.18	Sep-20	-7.44	16.99
Sep-17	5.32	-0.79	Dec-20	0.46	7.90
Dec-17	6.67	1.35	Mar-21	1.64	1.18
Mar-18	8.93	2.26	Jun-21	20.13	18.49
Jun-18	7.56	-1.37	Sep-21	8.40	-11.73
Sep-18	6.49	-1.07	Dec-21	5.40	-3.00
Dec-18	6.33	-0.16	Mar-22	4.10	-1.30
Mar-19	5.84	-0.49			

Source: Access from Economic Outlook database

**Figure 1: Quarter Trend of GDP Growth during 2016-2022**



Source: MS Excel by Authors

### V. FREQUENCY TREND OF LFR, ER, & UER

The post-liberalization history reveals that the labor force rate was 47.15% during 1990 and gradually it declined to 23.68% which indicates that more than 50% of the Indian labor force are not wanting to participate during the age period from 15 years to 24 years (Economic Outlook database). Figure. 2 and table no. 2 are showing the quarterly frequency trend of the Labor Force Rate (LFR) whose age is greater than 15 years, Employment Rate (ER), and Unemployment Rate (UER) during the period from Mar 2016 to Mar 2022. The growth rate of LFR was 51.06% in Mar 2016 and the rate declined to 41.21% in Mar 2022. Similarly, the employment rate was 42.75% which declined to 36.74% in Mar 2022. However, the unemployment rate, which was 8.59% in the first quarter of 2016, improved to 7.37% in March 2022, and the average rate of unemployment is noticed 7.34% during 2016-2022.

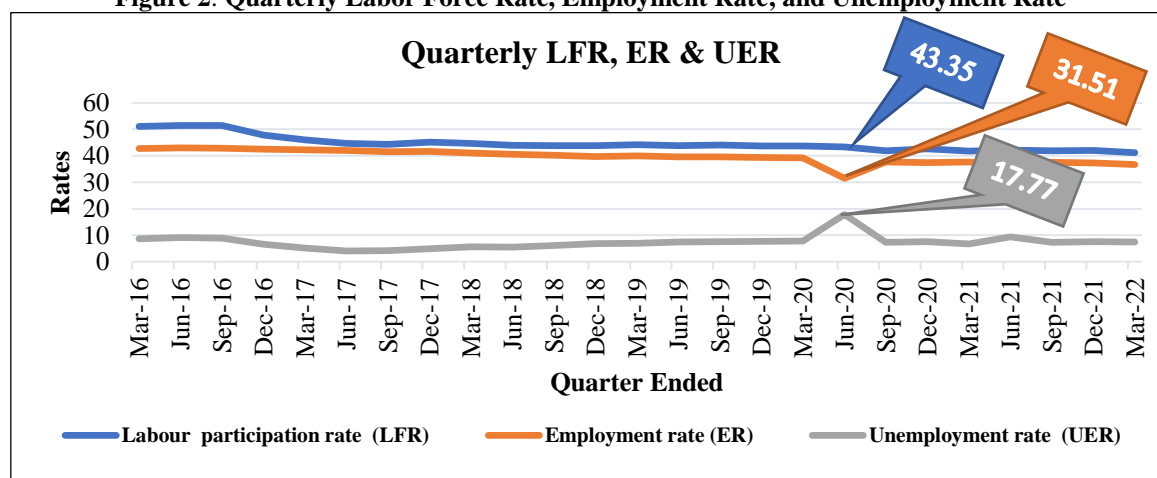
During the beginning of the COVID-19 period, a shock is found in ER and UER. In the first quarter of 2020-21, the labor force rate was 43.35% while the ER was 31.51%. Similarly, unemployment during the said period was 17.77% which is a devastating condition in the earnings of the labor force and it is the highest rate of post-reform in India.

**Table 2: Quarterly Labor Force Rate, Employment Rate, and Unemployment Rate**

Quarter Ended	LFR	ER	UER	Quarter Ended	LFR	ER	UER
Mar-16	51.06	42.75	8.59	Jun-19	43.78	39.53	7.42
Jun-16	51.42	42.99	9.12	Sep-19	44.01	39.59	7.55
Sep-16	51.41	42.87	8.85	Dec-19	43.72	39.38	7.66
Dec-16	47.75	42.48	6.61	Mar-20	43.64	39.22	7.81
Mar-17	46.05	42.27	5.18	Jun-20	43.35	31.51	17.77
Jun-17	44.64	41.97	4.01	Sep-20	41.88	37.67	7.34
Sep-17	44.26	41.49	4.12	Dec-20	42.61	37.39	7.54
Dec-17	45.12	41.68	4.84	Mar-21	41.76	37.71	6.65
Mar-18	44.72	41.08	5.62	Jun-21	42.09	36.25	9.33
Jun-18	43.97	40.52	5.48	Sep-21	41.9	37.54	7.31
Sep-18	43.81	40.23	6.09	Dec-21	41.96	37.32	7.58
Dec-18	43.85	39.72	6.86	Mar-22	41.21	36.74	7.37
Mar-19	44.18	39.92	6.92				

Source: Access from Economic Outlook database

**Figure 2: Quarterly Labor Force Rate, Employment Rate, and Unemployment Rate**



Source: MS Excel by Authors

### VI. COMPARATIVE FREQUENCY TREND OF LFR, ER, UER & GDP GROWTH

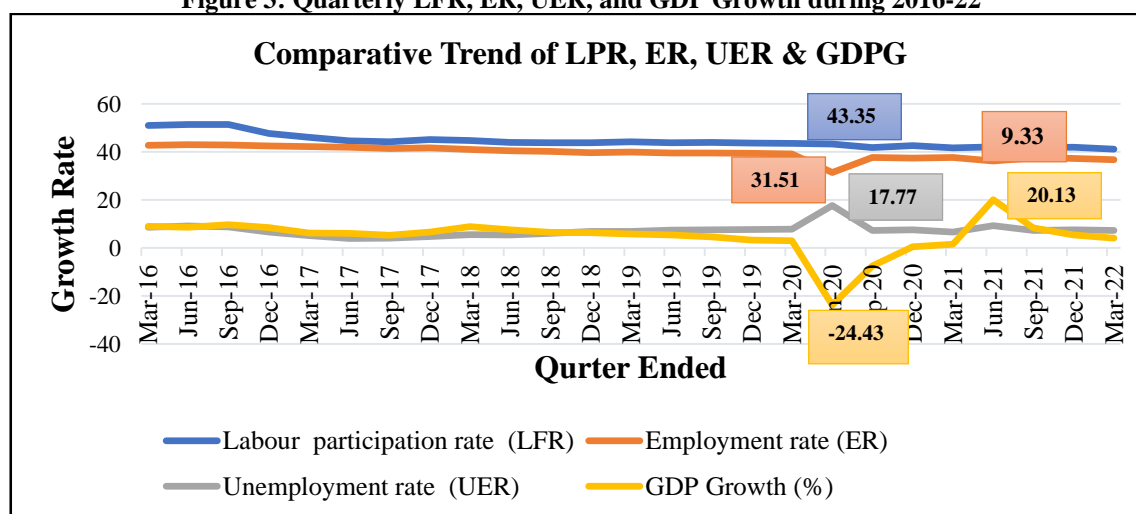
Table 3 and pictograph 3 are showing the comparative quarterly growth trend of the Labor Force Rate (LFR), Employment Rate (ER), Unemployment Rate (UER), and Gross Domestic Product Growth (GDPG), during the period from Mar 2016 to Mar 2022. In the first quarter of 2020-21, the employment rate (31.51%) was the lowest, the unemployment rate (17.77%) was the highest, and the GDP growth rate (-24.43%) was also very low due to the impact of lockdown amid of COVID-19. Similarly, another shock was witnessed in the first quarter of 2021-22 when the employment rate slightly declined to 36.25%, the unemployment rate increased to 9.33%, and GDP growth increased to 20.13%. This signal in the second wave of COVID-19, i.e., increase in unemployment as well GDP, is unusual and alarming situation for the economy of the country. However, this not continued in long run.

**Table 3: Quarterly LFR, ER, UER, and GDP Growth during 2016-22**

Quarter Ended	Labour Force Rate(LFR)	Employment Rate (ER)	Unemployment Rate (UER)	GDP Growth (%)
.	51.06	42.75	8.59	9.09
Jun-16	51.42	42.99	9.12	8.68
Sep-16	51.41	42.87	8.85	9.67
Dec-16	47.75	42.48	6.61	8.58
Mar-17	46.05	42.27	5.18	6.29
Jun-17	44.64	41.97	4.01	6.11
Sep-17	44.26	41.49	4.12	5.32
Dec-17	45.12	41.68	4.84	6.67
Mar-18	44.72	41.08	5.62	8.93
Jun-18	43.97	40.52	5.48	7.56
Sep-18	43.81	40.23	6.09	6.49
Dec-18	43.85	39.72	6.86	6.33
Mar-19	44.18	39.92	6.92	5.84
Jun-19	43.78	39.53	7.42	5.39
Sep-19	44.01	39.59	7.55	4.61
Dec-19	43.72	39.38	7.66	3.28
Mar-20	43.64	39.22	7.81	3.01
Jun-20	43.35	31.51	17.77	-24.43
Sep-20	41.88	37.67	7.34	-7.44
Dec-20	42.61	37.39	7.54	0.46
Mar-21	41.76	37.71	6.65	1.64
Jun-21	42.09	36.25	9.33	20.13
Sep-21	41.90	37.54	7.31	8.40
Dec-21	41.96	37.32	7.58	5.40
Mar-22	41.21	36.74	7.37	4.10

Source: Access from Economic Outlook database

**Figure 3: Quarterly LFR, ER, UER, and GDP Growth during 2016-22**



Source: MS Excel by Authors



## **VII. CHALLENGES OF EMPLOYMENT GENERATION IN INDIA**

Unemployment in developing countries like India is of quite different nature. The main cause of unemployment and underemployment prevailing in India is a deficiency of the stock of physical capital e.g., rapid industrialization, infrastructure, communication advanced machinery, etc. with which to employ the growing labor force. Due to the lack of physical capital, it has not been possible to absorb the growing labor force in productive employment.

Despite of an agricultural and labor-oriented country, the country is suffering from unemployment due to the reckless mechanism of different agricultural operations in India. Another problem of unemployment in India is an unequal distribution of land so that the agricultural households have inadequate land for production and participation in agriculture (Mukherjee, 2015).

The lack of infrastructure such as roads, power, telecommunications, highways, and irrigation facilities in agriculture is also responsible for the existence of huge unemployment in India. The inadequate availability of infrastructure is a great obstacle to the generation of opportunities for productive employment.

In the near past, a huge employment crisis was found during COVID-19. Over 85% of the employment in India is in the informal sector. The nationwide lockdown due to COVID outbreak halted economic activities and wiped-out livelihoods, especially for informal workers. Left with nothing, we saw reverse migration on an unprecedented scale. More than 10 million people abandoned cities and return to their native villages which struggled with a pathetic situation for livelihood due to the spread of COVID virus. This is a great challenge as well as the opportunity for each level of Government to create a large opportunity for the people at their native place to revamp the economic growth of the country.

## **VIII. EMPLOYMENT GENERATION: OPPORTUNITIES AND GOVERNMENT POLICIES IN INDIA**

Since the challenges of unemployment is a chronic problem for formal as well as for informal sectors in India. Despite of this, the government is always trying to generate employment opportunities in both sectors by employing different benevolent policies in India. The initiatives are taken by Government to generate employment opportunities in India viz. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana- National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM), Deendayal Upadhyay- Gramin Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY), Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), Shyama Prasad Mukherjee RUrban Mission, National Career Service (NCS), etc.

Further, the Government of India has taken various steps for generating employment in the country. The Aatmanirbhar Bharat package is to provide stimulus to businesses and to mitigate the adverse impact of Covid 19. Under this package, the Government is providing fiscal stimulus of more than Rs. 27 lakh crores. This package comprises various long-term schemes/programs/ policies for making the country self-reliant and creating employment opportunities.

The Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyaan (GKRA) of 125 days on 20th June 2020 to boost employment and livelihood opportunities for returnee migrant workers and similarly affected persons including youth in rural areas, in 116 selected districts across 6 States of Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh. The Abhiyaan has achieved an employment generation of 50.78 crores per day with a total expenditure of Rs 39,293 crore.

Aatmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana (ABRY) has been launched with effect from 1st October 2020 as part of Aatmanirbhar Bharat package 3.0 to incentivize employers for the creation of new employment along with social security benefits and restoration of loss of employment during Covid-19 pandemic. This scheme is implemented through the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), which seeks to reduce the financial burden of employers and encourages them to hire more workers. The terminal date for the registration of beneficiaries has been extended from 30.06.2021 to 31.03.2022. Benefits of Rs.3435 crore have been provided to 46.89 lakh beneficiaries through 1.26 lakh establishments till 29.01.2022.

Prime Minister Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) Scheme has been launched to provide working capital loans to Street Vendors, vending in urban areas, to resume their businesses on June 01, 2020, which were impacted adversely due to COVID-19. Under this scheme, credit worth Rs. 3,054 crores to 30.2 lakh street vendors as of 30.11.2021.

Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY) is being implemented by the Government for facilitating self-employment. Under PMMY, collateral-free loans up to Rs. 10 lakhs, are extended to micro/small business enterprises and to individuals to enable them to set up or expand their business activities. Up to 21.01.2022, Rs.32.12 crore loans were sanctioned under the scheme. The Production Linked Incentive Schemes being implemented by the Government have the potential for creating 60 lakh new jobs.

PM Gati Shakti is a transformative approach to sustainable development and economic growth. Roads, Railways, Airports, Ports, Mass Transport, Waterways, and Logistics Infrastructure are the seven engines of PM

Gati Shakti. This approach is powered by Clean Energy and SabkaPrayas leading to huge job and entrepreneurial opportunities for all.

The Central government is encouraging various projects involving substantial investment and public expenditure on schemes like the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) of the Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises, Deen Dayal Antodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM) of the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs etc. for employment generation.

Besides these initiatives, various flagship programs of the Government such as Make in India, Digital India, Smart City Mission, Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation, Housing for All, Infrastructure Development, and Industrial Corridors are also oriented towards generating employment opportunities.

In Jun 2022, the Prime Minister of India announced to fill of 10 lakhs government jobs at various levels i.e., Group-A and Group-B (gazetted), Group-B (Non-gazetted), and Group-C in the next one and half years. The drive is launched by Prime Minister on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2022 on the occasion of the Diwali celebration. The beginning drive includes appointment letters to 75000 at different levels of 38 ministries and departments and the mission is called "Rozgar Mela" (PMO, Oct. 2022).

## **IX. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

### **Conclusion**

The current study descriptively analyzes the comparative relationship between the employment status after economic reform, especially in the recent past, and economic growth (GDP growth) in India. As a labor force country and second highest populated country, the country always suffering from inveterate employment issues. The country must make a balance between the growth of the population, a balanced investment in rural as well as urban, and the generation of employment with a special preference for the rural sector. This initiation of government widely contributes towards the equal distribution of income and brings sustainable economic growth to the country. The task is the huge and only collaboration between all levels of Government (i.e., Union, State, City & Rural) and our dynamic private sector can hope to make substantial progress and also the implementation and accuracy level of each and every policy and program by all levels of government. Hence, the country should use the unprecedented health and economic crisis to truly build a new social contract, it's a commitment to India @ 75 (Azadi Ki Amrit Mahotsav).

### **Suggestions**

It may be addressed the basic three challenges that India must initiative through:

- ✓ Reform labor regulation
- ✓ Living Conditions for migrant labor in Cities
- ✓ The strength of our Rural Economy

#### **A. Reform Labor Regulations**

- ✓ The Stringent labor laws are protecting to workers, but it covers only formal sectors under 15% of employment. This labor aristocracy has almost complete protection and employers have no flexibility. The rest 85% of the workforce who are working in the informal sector have no protection but found employer flexibility.
- ✓ Hence, we need to address both ends of the labor spectrum to get the balance right between flexibility and protection for all labor forces which is possible through good faith and strong leadership by industry, labor, and government.

#### **B. Living Conditions in Cities**

- ✓ For too long we have been content to drive by slums where some of the people who clean homes, deliver goods, and repair our equipment live in squalor. How does the authority set in force a massive private home-building program? It probably needs liberal land use regulations and must build generous floor space buildings like New York, Hong Kong, Tokyo, etc.

#### **C. Strengthening the Rural Economy**

- ✓ Reverse migration is also an opportunity to collaborate in spreading the geography of development. We need three prolonged approaches:
  - i. The easiest way to grow more value-added crops i.e., fruits and vegetables have large export potential and exports must be consistently encouraged and not switched on and off as domestic prices changes. Also, the cultivation of palm plantations has the potential for huge import substitution.
  - ii. We need to encourage agro-processing near the source. Fostering entrepreneurship in rural and semi-urban areas would combine nicely with local processing.
  - iii. We need to invest even more massively in rural connectivity. It's important to invest in road connectivity along with digital connectivity.

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