

Daily Mains Practice Answer 10-09-2026

Q. How is demographic divergence between ageing developed economies and younger developing economies reshaping patterns of international migration? Examine with reference to India. (250 words, 15 marks)

Directions: Intro----How demographic divergence changes migration patterns + India's position + Challenges----Conclusion.

Introduction:

Start with demographic divergence.

The global economy is entering a period of profound demographic transition. Advanced economies are experiencing declining fertility, ageing populations and shrinking workforces, while countries such as India continue to possess a large pool of young workers.

Main Body

How does demographic divergence change migration patterns?

- **From surplus labour to global labour mobility** - Ageing economies in Europe, East Asia and parts of North America face shortages in healthcare, construction, manufacturing, logistics and care work.
- **Rise of skill-selective migration** - Destination countries are increasingly seeking globally employable talent, rather than simply low-cost labour - nurses, doctors, engineers, IT professionals, technicians and other skilled workers.
- **Care-economy migration** - Ageing populations are generating greater demand for caregivers, nurses, domestic workers and elderly-care professionals.
- **Temporary and circular migration** - Destination countries increasingly prefer regulated temporary workers to permanent settlement, producing more circular and contract-based migration.
- **South-North migration intensifies** - Younger populations in Asia and Africa increasingly supply labour to ageing economies in Europe, North America and East Asia.
- **New migration corridors** - Migration is expanding beyond traditional destinations, with countries such as Japan, South Korea, Germany and Gulf economies developing targeted labour-mobility programmes.

India's position in this demographic transition

- **Large youthful workforce** - India has around 450 million people aged 18-35,

according to UN estimates - youthful population can complement the ageing workforce.

- **Diverse skill supply** - India's migration potential extends from traditional low-skilled migration to high-value skilled mobility.
- **From “brain drain” to “brain circulation”** - Increasing remittances, diaspora networks, knowledge flows and return migration are creating a more complex phenomenon of “brain circulation.”
- *India received over \$110.47 billion in worker remittances in FY 2025-26.*
- **India - “global hub for trusted talent mobility”** - India can build an ecosystem that produces certified, trained and globally employable workers at scale.
- **Expanding technical education** - Rapid expansion of engineering, IT, vocational and professional education - large pool of technically skilled workers.
- **English-language advantage** - Faces lower linguistic barriers in countries such as the US, UK, Canada and Australia and leads to global access to jobs.
- **Diaspora networks** - Provide information, social connections and employment networks for prospective migrants.

Emerging concerns/challenges

- Anti-immigration politics - Limits permanent migration opportunities
- Fragmented recruitment - Increases exploitation and migration costs
- Skill mismatch - Indian qualifications may not always match foreign standards
- Brain drain in critical sectors - Can worsen domestic shortages
- Unequal access to skilling - Benefits may remain concentrated
- Temporary migration - Can create insecurity without social protection.

Conclusion:

Give a balanced conclusion and suggest some measures.

Demographic divergence is shifting migration from job-seeking to a strategic exchange of human capital between youthful labour-surplus and ageing labour-deficit economies.

For India, this presents a historic opportunity to convert its demographic dividend into “human-capital diplomacy”.

India should move towards a “brain circulation” rather than simply a “brain drain” model.