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Contents

1. Right to Education Act and Status of the Scheduled Tribe Education 1
----- *Prof. Bhattu Ramesh*
2. History and Development of Distance Education- A Study 13
----- *Prof. Gopu Sudhakar & Dr. C. Srinivasa Raju*
3. Status of Women in Unorganized Sector- A Study of Maid Servants 38
----- *Dr. T. V. Sujatha Kumari & Dr. B. Radha Devi*
4. Political Participation of Scheduled Caste Women in Telengana State- A Study 67
----- *Dr. A. Hari Prasad (Retd.) & N. Kavitha*
5. Administration of the NITI Aayog 92
----- *Dr. K. Rajender Reddy*
6. Kasturba Gandhi Girijana Balika Vidhyalaya Scheme (KGGBVS)- A Case Study 97
----- *Dr. Devath Suresh*
7. Role of Citizen's Charter in Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation 121
----- *Dr. P. V. Ramana Rao*
8. Status of Urban Health in India 134
----- *Dr. Chatla Ravinder*
9. Status of Youth in India 150
----- *Dr. Madhu A.*

10. Mobile Cell Phones and Cyber Crimes in India	158
----- <i>R. Shobha Rani</i>	
11. Status of Dalit Rural Women in India	167
----- <i>Ajmeera Amrutha</i>	
12. Migration From Rural Areas and Chronic Poverty	174
----- <i>B. Vijaya</i>	



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STATUS OF YOUTH IN INDIA



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Abstract : *There are 356 million youth constitute 28% of the country's population with 356 million 10-24 year-olds, India has the world's largest youth population despite having a smaller population than China, a latest UN report said on Tuesday. China is second with 269 million young people, followed by Indonesia (67 million), the U.S. (65 million) and Pakistan (59 million), Nigeria with 57 million, Brazil with 51 million, and Bangladesh with 48 million, the United Nations Population Fund's (UNFPA) State of the World's Population report said. It said that developing countries with large youth populations could see their economies soar, provided they invest heavily in young people's education and health and protect their rights. Within this generation are 600 million adolescent girls with specific needs, challenges and aspirations for the future, the report said. The report titled 'The power of 1.8 billion', said 28% of India's population is 10 to 24 year-olds, adding that the youth population is growing fastest in the poorest nations. Global number of youths is highest ever. As the world is home to 1.8 billion young people between the ages of 10 and 24 year, 9 in 10 of the world's young population live in less developed countries. The present paper focused on the status of the in India.*

Key words: Status of youth in India, Policies for youth.

Introduction

Youth being enthusiastic, vibrant, innovative and dynamic in nature is the most important section of the population. Youth shows strong passion, motivation and will power which also make them the most valuable human resource for fostering economic, cultural and political development of a nation. A country's ability and potential for growth is determined by the size of its youth population. Their role in building defence capability of a nation is unquestionably *prima una*. The energy and passion of the youth

if utilized properly, can bring huge positive change to the society and progress to the nation. Youth are the creative digital innovators in their communities and participate as active citizens, eager to positively contribute to sustainable development. This section of the population need to be harnessed, motivated, skilled and streamlined properly to bring rapid progress for a country.

The life experiences and perspectives of young people in the 21st century differ greatly. About 87 percent of young women and men living in developing countries face challenges brought about by limited and unequal access to resources, healthcare, education, training, and employment as well as economic, social and political opportunities. In many parts of the world, youth face poverty, hunger, barriers to education, multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, violence, and limited opportunities for growth and employment prospects. Youth are often excluded from decision-making processes and generally looks at untraditional avenues for civic engagement.

More than 600 million youth live in fragile and conflict-affected countries and territories. Young people are both the victims and the perpetrators of the violence in societies they live in. This diversity of situations explains why youth are considered both a source of concern and a beacon of hope and positive thinking.

Environmental, social and economic opportunities and risks are becoming harder to predict. The dynamic landscape overall is becoming far more complex. Development thinking, knowledge and experience are available from a wider array of sources and providers. While the complexity of today's social, economic, political and environmental issues constitutes a significant challenge, it also offers tremendous opportunities for youth to show their strengths as a strong self-organizing force with the potential for innovation and for embracing change.

Success in addressing the today's multiple development challenges facing youth will depend on finding ways to fight poverty, inequality and discrimination, deepen inclusion, and reduce conflict – and doing so without compromising human rights or inflicting irreversible damage on environmental systems.

Status of Youth in India

Youth Population and its Dynamics Youth in India

Absolute population of the country is the prime demographic determinant of the size of youth population. The population of India has been increasing steadily since the beginning of 20th century. A rapid growth rate in the population of the country was observed after independence as a result of decline in death rates due to various health interventions. The average annual addition of population during 2001-2011 was about 18.22 million, which was almost 2.3 times the average annual addition of population

during 1951 to 1961. However, according to the World Bank projections, average annual addition of population is expected to reach 19.3 million by 2021 and will decline to 13.6 million by 2031.

The sex ratio (females/1000 males) in India decreased from 946 in 1951 to a much adverse level of 927 in 1991. After that the sex ratio has improved up to 943 in 2011. However, the World Bank projections for India suggest a decrease of sex ratio to 931 by 2021.

The rate of growth in youth segment was consistently higher compared to general population till the year 2011. The same trend was noticed for both genders. According to World Bank population projections, the situation is set to reverse thereafter.

The change in the level of fertility and mortality affects the age distribution of the population in the subsequent years. The share of youth population in total population has been continuously increasing from the level of 30.6% in 1971 to 34.8% in 2011. After this, it is projected to decline and their share will come down to 31.8% by 2031. The percentage of male youth population to total male population follow the pattern of overall youth and was also on a steady rise till 2011. But the share of female youths to total female showed a slight decrease in 2001 which might have resulted due to declining sex ratio during this period. In terms of absolute numbers, the total youth population increased from 168 million in 1971 to 422 million in 2011. The average annual addition was the highest at 7.4 million during 2001-2011. It is likely to decrease to 5.7 million during 2011-2021 and further down to 1.1 million during 2021-2031 as per World Bank projections.

The sex ratio in youth population is consistently decreasing from 1991 onwards. The reduction in sex ratio of youth is found to be much more than that of the overall population. It has come down to 939 in 2011 as compared to 961 in 1971 and is projected to decline further to 904 in 2021 and 898 in 2031 (World Bank projection).

The age wise distribution of population indicates that maximum population in 5 years cohort in 2011 lies in the age group of 10-14 (both inclusive). However this will change and by 2031 it is projected to lie in the age group of 25-29.

Marital Status

Marriage is a prime social instrument in all societies to promote reproduction activity, though reproduction and child bearing biologically continue to be almost exclusive privilege of youth. The Percentage of currently married females in the age group 15-49 years is an important indicator which can reflect the level and pattern of fertility over age groups. The percentage share of currently married female in the age group 15-49 years has come down from 84.4 in 1961 to 73.8 in 2011. The percentage in the age group 15-19 years has come down drastically from 69.5 in 1961 to 19.5 in 2011

showing a welcome shift in the level of married women in younger age groups. The highest proportion of women married continued to be in the age group 30-34 (93%) in the year 2011 also. In all age groups, the percentage of married women has declined further during 2011.

Fertility and Contraception

Average number of children born per woman for an age group is an important indicator for measuring the reproductive uncertainty to be undergone by the women. The value of this indicator for teenage group is increasing gradually and has reached 0.47 in 2011 from 0.39 in 1981. This was low for rural areas as compared to urban areas till 2001. The difference had narrowed down to insignificant levels during 2001 and by 2011, the trend has reversed. For the all age groups except teenage group, average number of children born has shown a decreasing trend. The same pattern is observed in both rural and urban areas.

The age-specific fertility rate measures the annual number of births to women of a specified age group per 1,000 women in that age group. The cumulative value of the age specific fertility rates at the end of the child bearing ages gives a measure of fertility known as Total Fertility Rate (TFR). It indicates the average number of children expected to be born per woman during her entire span of reproductive period assuming that the age specific fertility rates, to which she is exposed to, continue to be the same and that there is no mortality. Fertility in India is falling significantly and TFR in urban areas has fallen below two children per woman. TFR is now just 0.2 points away from reaching the population-stabilizing “replacement level” of 2.1 children per woman.

Mortality and Neonatal Health care

Mortality is one of the basic components of population change and the related data is essential for demographic studies and public health administration. One of the most commonly used measures of mortality is Crude Death Rate (CDR) which indicates the total number of deaths per year per 1,000 people. As per SRS report, CDR at the National level for 2014 is 6.7 per thousand population and it varies from 7.3 in rural areas to 5.5 in urban areas.

Medical Care at Delivery

There are concerted Government efforts to prevent maternal and infant mortality during child birth. There are programmes aiming at institutional delivery both in rural and urban areas. As per SRS report 2014, around 90% of deliveries are occurring in institutions or are conducted by qualified professional. At the National level, 52.0% births took place in Government Hospitals (50.8% in rural areas and 55.3% in urban areas) and about 26.5% of birth occurred at Private Hospital. Medical attention by qualified professionals constitutes 11.3% of total delivery whereas untrained and others constitute 10.2 %.

Pregnancy Related Deaths

Maternal mortality and other health complications during pregnancy have been significantly high in India. 81.3% of pregnancy related deaths reported in 2014 were due to Oedema, proteinuria and hypertensive disorders, Complications predominantly related to the puerperium, Other complications of pregnancy and delivery, Indirect obstetric deaths and Obstructed labour. 9.0% deaths were due to the Pregnancies with abortive outcome.

Literacy and Employment

Literacy rate is one of the most important indicators of social development and is closely related to the socio economic growth of any country. Literacy rate of population is defined as 'the percentage of literates to the total population age 7 years and above'. Literacy rate in India has been growing consistently over the years and stands at 73% as per 2011 census. Female literacy rate (64.7%) is still much lower than male literacy rate (80.9%). However, the gender gap in literacy rate is gradually decreasing over years. It has come down from 21.6% in 2001 to 16.3% in 2011.

Student Enrollment in Higher Education

The higher education system along with basic education system in India has grown at a fast pace to become one of the largest systems in the world. From the student enrollment statistics given by All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2014-15, the highest number of students are seen to be enrolled at Under Graduate level. Out of the total students enrolled, 79% students are enrolled in Under Graduate level. Second to the Under Graduate, 11% students (38.5 Lakh) are enrolled in Post Graduate level.

Labour Force Participation

The labour force participation rate (LFPR) is defined as the number of persons in the labour force per 100 persons. According to NSSO 68th round survey (2011-12), labour force participation rate is significantly lower for females than for males in both rural and urban areas. During 2011-12, about 55 % of males and about 18 % of females in rural areas were in the labour force as per the usual status (ps), (i.e, and usual principal status) whereas the corresponding percentages in urban areas were about 56 % for males and about 13 % for females.

Unemployment

Unemployment rate is defined as the number of persons unemployed per 100 persons in the labour force (which includes both the employed and unemployed). The unemployment rates for females are found to be higher than those for males, and

highest among urban females. Also, the unemployment rates in urban areas are higher than those in rural areas. According to NSSO 68th round survey, considering usual status, unemployment rate for males was about 2% and for females was about 3% in rural areas. In urban areas, unemployment rate for females was 7% compared to 3% for males. The unemployment rate among the youth (15-29 years) was much higher as compared to that in the overall population. The rate was higher for urban youth than that for the rural youth. Further, compared to the female youth the unemployment rate for male youth was lower in general but remarkably lower in urban areas.

Welfare Policies and Programmes for Youth in India

Policy Initiatives for Youth in India

Youth has always been of vital concern of the Government of India. Various youth development programmes undertaken by the Union Government after Independence, like National Cadet Corps (NCC), National Service Scheme (NSS), Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) and the schemes for financial assistance to NGOs engaged in youth development bear ample testimony to this fact.

It was in the International Year of Youth (1985) that a separate Department of Youth Affairs & Sports was created in Government of India. This Department took initiative to formulate a National Youth Policy. Wide ranging consultations with all the concerned agencies including the voluntary organizations were held and a Draft National Youth Policy was formulated. This was further discussed in the conference of State Ministers in-charge of Youth Affairs and Sports held at Bangalore in June, 1987 and also by the National Advisory Committee. A comprehensive National Youth Policy was first evolved and laid on the Table of both houses of Parliament in November-December, 1988 and adopted by the Government.

The main features of the policy were that the Youth have a right as well and obligation to participate actively in shaping the destiny of the Nation. It emphasised the need to create increasing opportunities for them to develop their personalities and their functional capability and thus make them economically productive and socially useful.

A Committee for National Youth Programmes (CONYP) was also set up as per the guidelines of National Youth Policy with the Prime Minister as its Chairperson which led to the formation of a National level committee constituted by the Department of Youth and Sports for preparation of the National Perspective Plan for the Youth, 1996-2020. The committee identified various areas of concern for youth which inter-alia include:

1. Youth in Academic Institutions
2. Out of School/Non-Student Rural Youth.

3. Out of School/Non -Student Urban Youth and Youth in Slum Areas.
4. Training, Employment, Vocational Guidance and Career Counseling.
5. Youth-Culture and Creative.
6. Sports, Adventure and Recreation for Youth.
7. Youth and Adolescence.
8. Youth Health including Drug Abuse, Alcohol and HIV / AIDs
9. Youth-Sanitation and Environment
10. Youth with Special Needs
11. Youth and Gender Justice
12. Youth, Media and Communication
13. Youth in Urban Areas
14. Youth and Population
15. Youth in the North East

The National Youth Policy, 2003 replaced the erstwhile National Youth Policy 1988. The policy was redesigned to galvanize the youth to rise up to the new challenges, keeping in view the global scenario, and aimed at motivating them to be active and committed participants in the exciting task of National Development. The thrust of the Policy centred on “Youth Empowerment” in different spheres of national life. This Policy defined youth as persons in the age group of 13 to 35 years.

The National Youth Policy, 2014

The National Youth Policy, 2014 (NYP-2014) was launched in February, 2014. This policy reiterates the commitment of the entire nation to all-round development of the youth of India, so that they can realize their full potential and contribute productively to the nation-building process. The NYP-2014 has been finalized after extensive consultations with all the stakeholders. The Policy defines ‘youth’ as persons in the age-group of 15-29 years.

The NYP-2014 proposes a holistic ‘vision’ for the youth of India, which is “To empower youth of the country to achieve their full potential, and through them enable India to find its rightful place in the community of nations”. In order to realize this Vision, the NYP-2014 identifies 5 clearly defined ‘Objectives’ which need to be pursued and the ‘Priority Areas’ under each of the Objectives. The objectives and priority areas identified under the NYP-2014 are summarized below:

Objectives	Priority Areas
Create a productive workforce that can make a sustainable contribution to India's economic development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education • Employment and Skill Development • Entrepreneurship
Develop a strong and healthy generation equipped to take on future challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and healthy lifestyle • Sports
Instill social values and promote community service to build national ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of social values • Community engagement
Facilitate participation and civic engagement at all levels of governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in politics and governance • Youth engagement
Support youth at risk and create equitable opportunity for all disadvantaged and marginalized youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social inclusion • Social justice

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