

National Youth Policy of India 2003 **A Study**

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Introduction

National Youth Policy was formulated in 1988 to develop the youths physically, academically and economically. The socio-economic conditions of India have undergone a significant change and have been shaped by using a wide-range of technological advancement. The National Youth Policy- 2003 is designed to galvanize the youth to rise up and prepare themselves to face the new challenges. keeping in view of the global scenario the aims for motivating the youths to be active and committed to the exciting task of National development. The National Youth Policy, 2003 reiterates the commitment of the entire nation to the composite and all-round development of the young sons and daughters of India to establish an All-India perspective to fulfill their legitimate aspirations so that they can have strong heart and strong body and mind to become successful accomplishing challenging tasks for national reconstruction and social changes that lie ahead.

Youth Protection

The policy is based on recognition of the contribution of the youths who can and should, make to the growth and well-being of the community endeavors to ensure the effective co-ordination between the policies, programmers and delivery system of the various ministers, Departments and other agencies. The thrust of the policy centers around the “Youth Empowerment” in different spheres of national life.

India has to occupy the rightful place in the comity of nations and to have a meaningful discharge in the manifold obligations thereto, it would be imperative to ensure the effective pursuit of youth development programmers which promote personality development and qualities of citizenship and enhance commitment to the community service, Social justice, Self-reliance, National Integration and Humanism. An inclusive view of the entire universe as enshrined in our ancient scriptures. The policy, therefore, recognizes these inter-related values and principles as its basic premise. ¹

Definition of Youth

This policy will cover all the youths starting the age group of 13 to 35 years. It is acknowledged that all the persons within this age group are unlikely to be one homogenous group rather than a conglomeration of sub-groups with different social roles and requirements. The age group may, therefore, be divided into two broad sub-groups viz. 13-19 years and 20-35 years. The youth belonging to the age group 13-19 is a major part of the adolescent age and they will be regarded as a separate constituency. The number of youth at the age of 13-35 years as

per the 1991 census² was estimated at about 34 crores and 38 crores during 1997 which was anticipated to increase about 51 crores by the year 2016. The percentage of youth of the total population according to the 1991 census was estimated to be about 37% in 1997,³ and likely to increase to about 40% by the year 2016.⁴ The availability of a human resource of such magnitude for achieving socio-economic change and technological excellence needs commensurate infrastructure and suitable priorities to maximize its contribution to National Development.

Objectives of The National Youth Policy

The objectives of the National youth policy are:

- To instill in the youth, at large an abiding awareness of, and adherence to, the secular principles and values enshrined in the constitution of India, with unswerving commitment to patriotism, National Security, National Integration, Non-violence and Social Justice,
- To develop Qualities of Citizenship and dedication to community service amongst all sections of the youth,
- To promote awareness amongst the youth, in the fields of Indian history and heritage, arts and culture,
- To provide the youth with proper educational and training opportunities and to facilities access to information in respect of employment opportunities and to other services, including entrepreneurial guidance and financial credit,
- To facilitate access, for all sections of the youth, to health information and services and to promote a social environment which strongly inhibits the use of drugs and other forms of substance abuse, wards off disease (like HIV/AIDS), ensures measures for de-addiction and mainstreaming of the affected persons and enhances the availability of spots and recreational facilities as constructive outlets for the abundant energy of the youth,
- To sustain and reinforce the spirit of volunteerism amongst the youth in order to build up individual character and generate a sense of commitment to the goals of developmental programmers⁷,
- To create an international perspective in the youth and to involve them in promoting peace and understanding and establishment of a global economic order,
- To develop youth leadership in various socio-economic and cultural spheres and to encourage the involvement of Non-Governmental Organizations, Co-operative and Non-formal groups of young people, and
- To promote a major participatory role for the youth in the protection and preservation of nature, including natural resources, to channelize their abundant energies in the community service so as to improve the environment and foster a scientific, inquisitive reasoning and rational attitude among the younger generation and to encourage the youth to undertake such travel excursions and so the youths would better acquaint with cultural harmony, amidst diversity in India and overseas.

Thrust Areas of The Policy

Youth empowerment:

The policy recognize that in order for the youth to effectively participated in decision making processes, it is essential that they are better equipped with requisite knowledge, skills and capabilities. Towards this end, the policy envisions the following:

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Attainment of higher education level and expertise of the youth in line with their abilities and aptitudes access to the employment opportunities. Adequate nutrition for the full development of physical and mental potential and the creation of an environment which promotes good health ensure protection from disease and unwholesome habits. Development of youth leadership and its involvement in program and activities pertaining to National Development Equality of opportunity and respect for Human and Fundamental Rights without distinction of race, caste, creed, sex, language, religion or geographic location and access to facilities relating to sports, cultural, recreational and adventure activities.⁵

Gender Justice

The policy recognizes the prevailing gender bias to be the main factor responsible for the poor status of health and economic well-being of women in our society and that any discrimination on grounds of sex violates the basic rights of the individual concerned and therefore, stands for the elimination of gender discrimination in every sphere. The policy enunciates that: ⁶

1. Every girl child and young women will have access to education and would also be a primary target of efforts to spread literacy.
2. Women will have access to adequate health services (including reproductive health programmes) and will have full say in defining the size of the family.
3. Domestic violence will be viewed not only as violation of women's freedom but also as that of human rights.
4. All necessary steps should be taken for women's access to decision-making process, to professional positions and to productive resources and economic opportunities.
5. Young man, particularly the male adolescents shall be properly oriented, through education and counseling to respect the status and rights of women.⁷

The policy further enunciates that,

1. Action would be pursued to eliminate all forms of discrimination in respect of the girl child, negative cultural attitudes and practices against women, discrimination against women in education, skill development and training, and the socio-economic exploitation of women, particularly young women
2. Concerted efforts will be made to promote a family value system that nurtures a closer bond between men and women and ensures equality, mutual respect and sharing of responsibility between the sexes.

Inter- Sectoral Approach:

The policy recognizes that an inter-sectoral approach which is a pre-requisite for dealing with youth-related issues. It is therefore, advocates the establishment of a coordinating mechanism among the various central government ministers and departments between the central and state government and the community based organizations and youth bodies for facilitating convergence in youth related schemes, developing integrated policy initiatives for youth program for reviewing on-going activities / schemes to fill in gaps and remove unnecessary duplication and overlap.⁸

Information and Research Network

Youth development efforts in India have been hampered by lack of adequate information and research base. The policy, therefore, suggests the establishment of a well organized information & Research network in regard to various areas of concern to the youth to facilitate the formulation of focused youth development schemes and program. The Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development serves as the apex information and research centre on youth development issues. The National Youth Centre and the state youth centers also serve as a store house of information for the youth. At the micro level, the youth development centers under the NYKs will be equipped to serve as an information centers for the local youth.⁹

Key Sectors of Youth Concern

The policy recognizes the following areas as key sectors of concern for the youth:

1. Education
2. Training and Employment
3. Health and Family Welfare
4. Preservation of Environment, Ecology and wild life
5. Recreation and Sports
6. Arts and Culture
7. Science and Technology
8. Civics and Good Citizenship.

Education

The policy acknowledges the objectives of providing appropriate education, which enables the youth to develop into good citizens of the country which is also suitably influence relevant actions of the government and public behavior. It is recognized as the need of the educational system to instill, in the youth, an abiding sense of patriotism and in values oriented towards the unity and integrity of the country, equally calls for the elimination of violence in all forms, adherence to good moral and ethical values and respect and reverence for India's composited cultural and national heritage.

Privileges of Youth

The policy acknowledges the youth of the country and should be assured of the following.¹⁰

1. Appropriate education and training which enables them to render themselves socially useful and economically productive,
2. Gainful employment and adequate opportunities for personal development and advancement for those not currently in employment,
3. Requisite shelter and a clean environment, as also basic health services of quality,
4. Social defense and protection from all manner of exploitation,
5. Suitable participation in decision-making bodies which are concerned with the issues relating to the youth along with socio-economic and cultural matters,
6. Sufficient allocation of public funds for youth development,
7. Access to sports, physical education, Adventure and Recreational opportunities.

Responsibilities of Youth

The policy exhorts the youth to fulfill their responsibilities and those are enumerated below.¹¹

1. To contribute to sectoral, family and self development and to promote social and inter-generation understanding and gender equality,
2. To extend respect to teachers and elders, parents and the family, in consonance with our cultural norms and traditions,
3. To uphold the unity and integrity of the nation, maintain peace and harmony, observe fundamental duties and respect the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed under the constitution to all section of the people,
4. To respect others faith and beliefs in the religious, cultural and social spheres and to different schools of thought and to neither exploit nor be instrumental in the exploitation of fellow citizens and other persons, especially women,
5. To preserve and protect the environment
6. To commit themselves to create a discrimination and exploitation free environment and to devote their time and energy in nation building activities.

Training and Employment

This Policy recognizes the question of employment of very serious concern for the Indian Youth and that several social issues arise out of widespread unemployment and under-employment of the Youth. The current trends suggest that the growth rate of the labor force has been higher than the growth rate of population and that the growth rate of employment has not been in proportion to GDP growth. The critical issues in this area include a mismatch between skills requirement and employment opportunities, low technology levels, low wages and low productivity, occupational shifts in employment .under–employment owing to seasonal factors, excess labor supply in relation to demand, migration of the labor force from the rural to urban areas and limited participation of women in the work force, especially in the organized sector¹².

Youth and Health

The policy recognizes a holistic approach towards health, mental, physical and spiritual , needs to be adopted after careful assessment of the health needs of the youth. As per the Youth population projections based on the 1991 census about 21.4% of the total population in 1996 was estimated to be in the age group of 10- 19 years; of these, about 78.4% lived in the rural and the remaining (21.6%) in the urban areas. The mean age of marriage in the rural areas was 21.56 years for males and 16.67 years for female. In the urban areas, the mean age for marriage was 24.32 years for males and 19.92 years for females . In other words, most women in India are married during the age of adolescence.¹³

Sports and Recreation

Having recognized the overall objective of the policy is the all-round development of personality of the youth and noting that Sport Physical Education, Adventure, Recreation and related activities might often be overlooked. This policy strongly supports these activities as important areas of human resource development. No system of education could be considered

successful, unless it addresses the urges and aspirations of the youth to be creative and appreciative of manifold facets of nature and of social life.¹⁴

Implementation Mechanism

The policy envisions the following implementation mechanism:

- All Ministers/Departments of the union Government and the state governments, particularly in the social sector will strive to make identifiable allocations in their budgets for youth development programmes;¹⁵
- A broad based National Committee on Youth Policy and Programmes is contemplated to review and asses various programmes is contemplated to review and assess various programmes and schemes focusing on youth .It will also advise the Government on measures for implementation of the plan of Action of the National Youth Policy;
- The Union Minister of Youth Affairs & Sports will be the Nodal Ministry for all such programmes and schemes and will oversee the implementation of the provisions of this policy¹⁶ ;
- An effective mechanism to coordinate the activities of the Central Ministers /Departments ,would be evoked in order to facilitate timely execution of youth development programmes; and
- A National Youth Development Fund will be created through contributions, including from Non-Governmental Organizations, which would be utilized for youth development activities .income Tax exemption would be sought for contribution to the fund.

Conclusion

National Youth Policy is essential for the development of Younger Generations as well as for the Nation. The Eminent Scientist Abdul Kalam and Swami Vivekananda had strongly believed on the potential of Youth as such Swami Vivekananda strongly believed that The Nation's Youth held the key for solving various problems facing India. He repeatedly gave the call for the Youths to **Awake, arise and work** for Nation and its people.

End Notes

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