

**NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY 2012: A RIGHT BASED  
POLICY FOR YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AND  
DEVELOPMENT**

**Dr.PitabasaSahoo\***

**Abstract:**

Youth in India constitute a sizeable group and there can be no greater priority for development consensus than bringing the needs, rights and expectations of the youth to the centre-stage of development through a right based policy. A comprehensive National Youth Policy provides direction to youth-focused interventions by the Central and State governments and the voluntary sector, empowering young people for affirmative and positive action and transforming their life. Recognising the need for an integrated and collaborative approach to youth development programmes in the country, The National Youth Policy 2012 seeks to ensure that youth needs and concerns are mainstreamed into overall national development policies. The paper underscores the need for National Youth Policy for wholesome development of the young people for empowerment and social justice

\* Dean of Research, Monitoring & Evaluation and Head, School of Youth Studies and Extension, Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development, Sriperumbudur.

## 1. Introduction:

United Nation's World Programme of Action for Youth in its resolution states that every State should provide its young people with opportunities for obtaining education, for acquiring skills and for participating fully in all aspects of society. The future of India is intimately connected with that of the young people and in this context the Government of India is formulating youth policy that responds effectively to the changing conditions of the young people in the 21st Century. The policy aims to put young people at the centre of country's growth and development. The NYP 2012 is a step forward from the earlier Policy formulated in 1988 and, later, in 2003. It reaffirms commitment of the nation to the rights and holistic development of the young people of the country through empowerment and social justice.

## 2. National Youth Policy 1988:

The importance of youth has been recognized from the beginning of the planning process in the country. The steps to formulate a National Youth Policy were first initiated in 1985 in the International Year of Youth. After wide ranging consultation with all concerned, including voluntary youth organizations, a draft national youth policy was prepared. It was further discussed in a conference of State Ministers in Charge of Youth Affairs and Sports held in Bangalore in June 1987 and also in the National Youth Advisory Committee. The first National Youth Policy was formulated and laid in both the House of Parliament on 11th November 1988 in the Rajya Sabha and 1st December 1988 in the Lok Sabha. The National Youth Policy, 1988 aimed at creating opportunities for the youth to develop the personality and their functional capabilities, and thus make them economically productive and socially useful. The Policy aimed inter-alia, at inculcating among the youth, respect for principles and values enshrined in our Constitution, awareness of our historical and cultural heritage, qualities of discipline, self-reliance, justice, fair play, a scientific temper and promotion of world peace. The Policy called for action for awareness building and mass education, training programmes aimed at personality development and character building, physical fitness, fostering contacts between youth from different parts of the country, and providing encouragement to the youth through awards for outstanding work. The

Department of Youth affairs and Sports in the Ministry of Human Resource Development was designated as the Nodal Agency for implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Policy.

### 3. National Youth Policy 2003:

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 and seeks to establish an All-India perspective to fulfil their legitimate aspirations so that they are all of strong body, mind and heart in successfully accomplishing the challenging tasks of national reconstruction and social changes that lie ahead.

#### Thrust Area:

a) Youth empowerment; Gender Justice; Inter-Sectoral Approach; Information & Research Network:

#### Key Sectors of Youth Concern:

a) The Policy recognizes the following areas as key sectors of concern for the youth; Education; Training and Employment; Health and Family welfare; e) Preservation of Environment, Ecology and Wild life; f) Recreation and Sports; g) Arts and Culture; h) Science and Technology; and i) Civics and Good Citizenship.

#### Priority Target Groups:

The Policy accord priority to the following groups of young people:

a) Rural and Tribal Youth; b) Out-of-school Youth; c) Adolescents particularly female adolescents; d) Youth with disabilities; e) Youth under especially difficult circumstances like victims of trafficking; orphans and street children.

### 4. The Draft NYP, 2012:

The draft of NYP 2012 is developed on the earlier versions of Policy Frameworks formulated in 2003. It aims to reinforce policies and programmes of the current Policy that continue to have relevance; identify gaps keeping in view the changing scenario of the situation of young people in the country and propose new strategic policy and programme interventions to ensure that the

process of overall development and growth of young people of the country continues unabated. These new interventions have to take into consideration the challenges posed by increasing globalisation, immense technological advancement during the last decade of ICT revolution and the emergence of India as the global economic power.

#### 4.1 Definition of Youth:

According to the 2001 Census, India's youth population (age-group of 15 – 35 years) was 355 million. This translated into approximately 390 million people as per the current definition of youth (age group of 13-35 years) in the National Youth Policy, 2003. Further, adolescents (age group of 10-19 years), for the first time in the country, have been recognized as a distinct sub-group. According to the initial figures of the 2011 census, the youth population in the country including adolescents is around 550 million. This phenomenal rise in the youth population has made India the youngest nation with a demographic dividend appearing to be a reality. It is indeed vital to utilise this demographic dividend and channelize the youth and their creative energies for nation-building.

The young persons within the age bracket of 16-30 are not homogeneous group, sharing common concerns and needs, and having different roles and responsibilities. United Nation Definition of Youth is from people from 15 – 24 years of age, in Australia the age of youth is 15 – 25, Britain 14 – 29 years, Canada 15 – 24 years, China 14 – 28 years, Jamaica 14 – 29 years, Singapore 15 – 29 years and as per Commonwealth it is 15-29 years. The NYP 2012 aims to cover the age group of 16 – 30 years and all young persons within this age group are unlikely to be a homogeneous group, sharing common concerns and needs and having different roles and responsibilities.

- The first sub group of 16 – 21 years covers adolescents whose needs and areas of concern are substantially different from youth under the other age groups.
- The second sub group of 21 – 25 years includes those youth who are in the process of completing their education and entering into a career.
- The third sub group of 26 – 30 years comprises of young women and men most of whom have completed their education, including professional education, and are, more or less, settled in career and personal life.

#### 4.2 Objectives:

The key objectives of NYP 2012 are to:

- Strengthen the culture of patriotism among young people and help them to become responsible citizens of the country who care for their families and communities in which they live.
- Instil a sense of national unity and social cohesion in the young people while recognizing and respecting the diversities – in religion, language, culture, ethnicity, lifestyle and habitat – in the country. They should be groomed to become promoters of peace and harmony in the community in which they live
- Foster in young people not only an abiding commitment and adherence to the values enshrined in our Constitution but also develop them as key promoters of these values in all sections of the society. They should play a significant role in advancing appropriate standards and values of ethical conduct in individual and social life.
- Through a sustained programme of education and training, and appropriate support services, help young people become economically self-reliant and productive units of the country, either by taking up employment or by setting up their own business enterprises.
- Empower youth to take up the challenge of eliminating all forms of social and economic discrimination and exploitation; counter forces that threaten to undermine national harmony; and launch a crusade against unhealthy social practices, evils and human rights violation.

#### 4.2 Thrust Areas:

The thrust areas of the NYP 2012 are:

- Promotion of national values, social harmony and national unity
- Empowering youth through employable skill development and providing entrepreneurship opportunities
- Education – formal, non-formal and continuing learning
- Health and healthy lifestyle
- Sports and recreation facilities

- Promoting gender justice and equality
- Participation in community service
- Social justice and action against unhealthy social practices
- Issues related to environment, its conservation and preservation
- Youth and local governance, including support to state-sponsored programmes and schemes

### 5. A Right Based Policy for Youth Empowerment and Development:

Empowering young people really mean providing those opportunities to enhance their capabilities through education and training, including skill development, thus enabling them to make choices so that they can become more productive and offering them the option of engaging in business enterprises. Gender inequality, oppression of women and their vulnerability are too well known. It is recognized that the problems are deep-rooted in the society and will require enormous efforts to weed them out of our society. The high female infant mortality rates, the practice of female foeticide, neglect of female children with regard to access to health services, nutrition and education, sexual abuse of girls, trafficking of women and girl children, violence against women are some of the critical issues that need to be urgently addressed. The concerns of the socially excluded and marginalized women need to be given priority.

Transgender have for long been the butt of ridicule and diversion of society. They have virtually lived a life of complete segregation from the mainstream,” said the draft policy, including them among the groups that suffer from social or moral stigma along with gays and lesbians and those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis. The highlights are the LGBT community and HIV / AIDS patients, who have both been categorised as groups that suffer from stigma. Transgender have for long been the butt of ridicule and derision of society. They have virtually lived a life of complete segregation from the mainstream,’ reads the draft policy. ‘The gays and lesbians have never been accepted in society as same-gender sex has always been treated in our society as perverted and immoral behaviour,’ it adds. ‘The result of these deeply embedded stereotypes and biases



has been that gays and lesbians are reluctant to express their sexual preferences openly.’ The other target groups include students, migrants, rural youth, tribal youth, those at risk (such as sex workers, trafficking victims), youths in violent conflicts (living in trouble spots), school dropouts and youths in institute.

The concerns of Ministry Of Women and Child Development and National Commission for women, Social Justice and Tribal Affairs are taken into consideration in the draft Youth Policy 2012. The problems and issues related to Indian women and their vulnerability are recognized in the policy document .The high female infant mortality rates; the practice of female foeticide; neglect of female children with regard to access to health services, nutrition and education; violence in the family and outside it; and sexual abuse of girls are some of the critical issues that need to be urgently addressed.

Recognising the need for an integrated and collaborative approach to youth development programmes in the country, it is necessary that a comprehensive and distinct framework is made available to all youth-related ministries, departments, agencies and voluntary organisations to translate their policies into workable action plans. It is hoped that the suggested course of action will ensure full and effective implementation of policies, and all key stakeholders, especially Department of Education and health, state-sponsored youth development agencies, voluntary organisations, and the corporate sector, will carry out their roles and responsibilities with full earnestness and zeal. It is imperative that not only Department of Education but the Ministry of Human Resource Development has to play a predominant role in realizing the Youth Policy.

### 5.1 Major Highlights of NYP 2012:

- a) The Draft NYP 2012 is first of its kind as it recognises youth not as a homogenous group and has numerous differentials based on habitat, environment, socio-economic status of their families and their own life styles.
- b) Defended reducing the target age group from existing 13-35 years to 16-30 years to realign the definition of youth in India to international definitions as UN consider 15 to 24 years and C Commonwealth 15 to 29 years.

c) Moreover, if a woman marries at legal age of 18 years and has a child then for three years when she becomes 32 both she and her child who is above 13 will simultaneously be considered as youth which is an anomaly,” he explained. In addition, the Draft Policy proposes to change the target age group from the existing 13-35 years to 16-30 years.

d) In a first, Youth Development Index (YDI) that would serve as the baseline and ready reckoner for evaluators and policy makers has also been incorporated as a part of the policy.

e) In a significant move forward, the Draft Youth Policy, for the first time, has also been under pinned by the guiding principle of providing targeted employable skills to different youth segments in line with Prime Minister’s Skill Development Mission, apart from identifying varied segments based on socio-economic, gender and geographical parameters as specific targets.

f) For the First time, the government is trying to focused on problems of transgenders, gays and lesbians with the draft national youth policy 2012 placing the social group in the targeted category that needs suitable policy interventions to deal with social or moral stigma.

g) The other seven ‘target groups’ are students, migrants, rural youth, tribal youth, those at risk (such as sex workers, drug users and trafficking victims), youths in violent conflicts (living in trouble spots), school dropouts and youths in institutional care.

h) Same-gender sex has always been treated in our society as perverted and immoral behaviour. The result of the embedded stereotypes and biases has been that gays and lesbians are reluctant to express their sexual preference policy note says. It promises policy intervention for “qualitative change in the attitude towards women and sex minorities”.

i) The Draft NYP 2012 has monitorable indicators under five domains. Accordingly, Youth Development Index will include the indices viz. Youth Health Index, Youth



Education Index, Youth Work Index, Youth Amenities Index, Youth Participation Index.

## 6. 12th Five Year Plan Priorities:

The 12th Five Year Plan (2012-2017) commences within a year of the conclusion of the international year of youth (2010-2011). The coincidence is very special in many ways. The Twelfth Five Year Plan takes off in the backdrop of a huge 'youth bulge' changing the complexion of the demographic situation of India. For the first time the country is experiencing a demographic dividend in the form of massive youth population and the demographic window is likely to continue till 2050 thus placing the country at an advantageous position. Hence from the youth point of view the Twelfth Plan assumes great importance. In view of this, it is expected that this plan period will witness considerable qualitative improvement in the lives of the young. Since youth, by virtue of their psycho motor skills and immense energy, are assumed to be vital actors in the socio- economic processes, their potential to contribute to the society, inevitably, has to be enhanced. In the process, their pressing needs like health, education and cultural needs have to be adequately addressed.

### 6.1 Policy Programmes for 12th Five Year Plan:

The period from 12 August 2010 to 12 August 2011 has been declared by the United Nations as the International Year of Youth. This is a way forward to ensure that young women and men realise their optimum potential while continuing to contribute to the overall development of their communities, in particular, and the nation, at large during the 12th Five Year Plan.

#### i) State wise Youth Policy:

There are a number of variables that impact the life of young women and men across the country and, as a result there may be some state or region-specific needs and concerns of young people. It is, therefore, suggested that the states may suitably modify the draft NYP 2012 which are in website [www.rgniyd.gov.in](http://www.rgniyd.gov.in) and enunciate its own State Youth Policy and draw programmes.

#### ii) Coordination:

There is a need for the convergence of efforts and resources of the state-sponsored youth-related agencies, voluntary sector engaged in social development activities, international agencies, and the corporate world for the promotion of youth development programme in India. This calls for the establishment of a functional mechanism for coordinating these efforts as part of an on-going, productive, and valuable partnership at the state level.

### iii) Developing Adolescent Development Policy:

At present adolescent issues and concerns are being addressed by various Ministries like, Women and Child Department (Adolescent Girls), Human Resource Development (those in schools), Health Department (health related issues) and Youth Affairs and Sports (under its NPYAD). There is no comprehensive policy in the country to address the adolescent health and developmental concerns. Considering the size and magnitude of the adolescent population, enormity of the issues and concerns, severity of the problem relating to health and development; a comprehensive adolescent health and development policy is required.

### iv) Promoting gender justice and equality

The problems and issues related to Indian women and their vulnerability are too well known. All the youth programmes should ensure that gender concerns are main-streamed in its planning and budgeting and the way it functions.

## 7. State Youth Policies:

The States of Haryana, Jharkhad, Kerala, Manipur, Meghalaya, Odisha have prepared the State Youth Policy. The RGNIYD has planned to conduct consultation meetings in the year 2012-13 at various state headquarters for formulation of State Youth Policies The NYP 2012, upon finalization will set out a comprehensive Plan of Action, indicating programmes and activities that may be undertaken in each of the 11 thrust areas. It is likely that some of these programmes are already been implemented by the state-sponsored youth development agencies, such as, NYKS, NSS, and the RGNIYD. For effective monitoring and evaluation of each of the programmes, the implementing agency shall draw up a set of criteria and prepare necessary tools and instruments for the purpose.

### 7.1 Comparative Statement on State Youth Policies:

Content	Meghalaya	Kerala	Jharkhand	Manipur
<b>Year</b>	2012	2011	2007	2004
<b>Definition of Youth</b>	Age-bracket of 13 to 30 years.	Age between 13 to 35	Age group 10 to 30 years	Age group of 13-35 years
<b>Vision</b>	Helping the youth of the State to achieve the highest level of physical, mental and social attainments Make youth participative, proactive and productive	To create an enabling environment for youth participation in the development process by incorporating the values of social justice and equality	Individuals enjoy healthy productive lives in harmony with their social responsibilities and contribute to a national resurgence.	To create increasing opportunities for youth to develop their personality and functional capability and thus made them economically productive and socially useful.
<b>Goal</b>	The state has to create an enabling environment for youth to realise their rights, potentials and opportunities in the state and making them self-reliant, empowered and active citizens.	Empowerment and socio economic development of youth by creating a positive change in the level of knowledge, attitude and skill through multiple invention strategies appropriate to each subgroup to attain holistic development of the youth.	Foster a culture of youth empowerment and participation in decision-making	The policy will facilitate greater participation of youth in the process of decision-making and execution of welfare programme of the Govt at local and higher level.
<b>Objectives</b>	a) Develop qualities of leadership and	a).Congregate all the youth related programmes and	a).To reinforce in the youth the	a).To foster a spirit of national consciousness.

	<p>dedication to community service and democratic values</p> <p>b). Strengthen culture of patriotism among young people and help them to become responsible citizens</p> <p>c) Instill a sense of national unity and social cohesion in the young people</p> <p>d) Harness the strength of youth for effective development of society</p> <p>e). Provide youth with proper educational and training opportunities for self-development</p> <p>f). Facilitate access to information in respect of employment opportunities</p>	<p>activities of different departments and NGOs.</p> <p>b). Strengthen the programme delivery system of the youth related activities in the state</p> <p>c). Adopt different measures to make aware about the importance of the self-development and devise appropriate strategies for training.</p> <p>d). provide sufficient training facilities in all the district to train youth</p> <p>e). Promote value education among youth by making it a part of the curriculum in school and colleges and also by training programmes and follow up</p> <p>f). Increase the involvement of student youth in NCC, NSS, NYK, Scout and Guides, Sports Club, Arts Clubs, Community</p>	<p>spirit of volunteerism and adherence to secular principles</p> <p>b).To promote formal education, vocational education and training opportunities</p> <p>c)To provide comprehensive youth-friendly health services</p> <p>d) To create an enabling environment for sustainable, rightful and gainful livelihood</p> <p>e)To preserve and promote traditional art, culture and heritage and promote healthy lifestyle</p>	<p>b).To promote dignity of labour through voluntary services.</p> <p>c). To equip youth for employment.</p> <p>d).To develop youth leadership</p>
--	---	---	---	--

	<p>g). Empower youth to eliminate all forms of social and economic discrimination and exploitation</p> <p>h). Sustain and reinforce the spirit of volunteerism and contribute productively to the welfare of the communities</p>	<p>police and Students Police Service in order to imbibe and reinforce discipline, nonviolence, leadership, democratic participation and leadership.</p> <p>g).Organize parenting programmes</p> <p>h).Instil the spirit of volunteerism and initiative among youth</p> <p>i).Initiate appropriate measures to increase the literacy level of tribal people in the state</p> <p>j).Promote dignity of labour among youth</p> <p>k).Reduce unemployment by increasing employability</p>		
<b>Target Groups</b>	<p>a).Student youth</p> <p>b).Rural youth</p> <p>c).Youth at risk</p>	<p>a).Student youth</p> <p>b).Rural youth</p> <p>c).Youth at risk</p>	<p>a)Rural youth</p> <p>b)School youth</p> <p>c)Adolescents</p> <p>d)Youth at risk</p>	<p>a)Rural youth</p> <p>b)Out of the school youth</p> <p>c)Adolescent, particularly female adolescents</p> <p>d)Youth with disabilities</p> <p>e)Youth under</p>

<p><b>Key sectors</b></p>	<p>a) Youth empowerment b) Education c) Capacity building d) Youth active Citizenship e) Youth Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Livelihood promotion</li> <li>• Employment and Entrepreneurship development</li> <li>• Employability and competency building</li> <li>• Vocational training and skill development</li> <li>• Multi-skilling</li> <li>• Sports</li> <li>• Youth health and adolescent sexual and Reproductive health</li> <li>• Environment</li> <li>• Alcoholism</li> <li>• Recreation and leisure time activities</li> <li>• Suicide</li> <li>• Gender justice and Equality</li> <li>• Youth participation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Art, Culture, and Sports</li> <li>○ Education</li> <li>○ Health</li> <li>○ Livelihood and Employment</li> <li>○ Institutional Capacity Building</li> </ul>	<p>special difficulties</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Education</li> <li>○ Training and employment</li> <li>○ Health</li> <li>○ Preservation of environment, ecology and wildlife</li> <li>○ Recreation and sports</li> <li>○ Science and technology</li> <li>○ Arts and culture</li> <li>○ Civic and good citizenship</li> </ul>
<p><b>Implementation Mechanism</b></p>	<p><b>a) State Youth Forum</b> constituted by: *Young members of Assembly *Representatives of young members of</p>	<p>State level coordination committee under the Chairmanship of Minister of Youth Affairs and State level core committee with</p>	<p>A Coordination Committee in the Department of Art, Culture, Sports and Youth Affairs Minister as</p>	<p>All departments of the state govt. dealing with youth related activities A state committee on youth policy and programmes headed by Chief Minister The Department of</p>



	<p>District Council * Young achievers in different fields *Representatives of differently-abled Youth and young media professionals <b>b) Youth Development centre</b> <b>c) State Youth Commission</b></p>	<p>expert from Education/ Health/ State youth welfare board/ NYK/ and NGO In district under the chairmanship of collector In Panchayat there should be panchayat level implementation committee</p>	<p>Chairperson, the Secretary as Member Secretary, and representative s of organizations such as NCC, NYK, NSS, and NGOs as members.  Planning, monitoring and the implementing at the district level - District youth advisory committees</p>	<p>Youth Affairs and Sports A state Youth Board - Chaired by Commissioner/Secretary (YAS) (Representatives various Department, NGOs, civil society organization and eminent persons with Director (YAS) as Member Secretary.) A separate Directorate for youth services would be set up at the earliest.</p>
--	---	---	--	--

**Conclusion:**

Since our national progress depends, crucially, on the ways and means through which the youth are encouraged and nurtured as a positive force for national progress, it is essential for an appropriate policy framework to be in place to harness the energies of the youth in this task. Recognizing, that youth development is a multifaceted concept, it is equally necessary that all the relevant agencies, including the Central and the State governments, in partnership with other stakeholders of the society – voluntary organizations, civil society groups and the corporate sector – should ensure that equal opportunities for growth are extended to young people for their overall development, growth and empowerment where they are productively engaged in activities aimed towards social justice . The National Youth Policy 2012 is a right based policy facilitating multidimensional and integrated approach for youth empowerment and social justice in the country.

**References:**

- 1) Draft National Youth Policy, 2012, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Govt. of India, 2012.
- 2) Working Group Report on Youth Affairs and Adolescent Development for formulation of 11th Five year Plan, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Govt. of India, New Delhi, 2007
- 3) Sub Group Report on Policy, Programme and Institutions, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Govt. of India, New Delhi, 2011
- 4) State Youth policy, Manipur, 2007
- 5) State Youth Policy, Jharkhand, 2007
- 6) State Youth Policy, Kerala, 2011
- 7) State Youth Policy, Meghalay, 2012

