sabbatical leave for undertaking research, establishing a peer reviewed journal to provide a platform for publication for scholars, and other such measures.

6. Special Education Committees must be set up in all Open and Distance Education institutions to address the needs of learners with disabilities as well as senior citizens. These committees must devise mechanisms to ensure their participation and provide effective mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation of policies and collection of feedback. Admission criteria and time tables must be flexible enough to provide diverse options for meeting programme requirements to differently able learners and senior citizens. Pedagogical tools and components from the open educational resources must be adaptable to alternative formats for special learning needs. This could include, for example, Braille, colour-contrast texts and voice recordings for the visually disabled.

7. A new regulatory mechanism must be established by appointing a Standing Committee on Open and Distance Education under the Independent Regulatory Authority for Higher Education (IRAHE). The Standing Committee on Open and Distance Education would serve as the nodal agency for the National Educational Foundation on open educational resources, the National Education Testing Service (NETS) and the Credit Bank.

8. For the quality assessment of Open and Distance Education, a rating system to assess the standard of all institutions imparting Open and Distance Education must be evolved and made publicly available. The Standing Committee would stipulate grading norms and independent rating agencies would be licensed by Independent Regulatory Authority for Higher Education to carry out this function. In addition, it is recommended that every Open and Distance Education institution has an internal quality assurance cell to ensure that statutory quality compliances are regularly met and the establishment of new organizations namely National Educational Testing Service, the Credit Bank, the National Educational Foundation for developing common open resources would receive initial financial support from government.

Conclusion

The National Knowledge Commission suggested important reforms for creating a knowledge society. Establishment of different organizations as suggested by it would bring qualitative development in Open and Distance Education. A research environment is essential to accord Open and Distance Education value as a discipline, as opposed to it being consigned to a mode.

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THE PANORAMA OF YOUTH IN INDIA: A SOCIO–DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

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Abstract

Youth is seen as the key determining feature of a society, as a society depends more on this section. There seems to be near unanimity in the view that youth cannot be ignored in our social reckoning. A special attention is to be paid to this large chunk of population, their needs and problems. The focus of the present study is to understand the situation, needs and aspirations of youth in India; it is argued that since youth have to take up the future of the society, they have to be properly groomed to take up this huge and arduous task, which lies ahead of them. They are credited with a burning zeal and unlimited enthusiasm even if often they are accused of the lack of direction and approach. The present study "The panorama of youth in India: A socio-demographic analysis", is significant as it mainly concentrates its attention to define the concept of youth in India, who is the most imperative and significant section of the society, and there is today a general impatience among them with the existing social structure and social system. The study is a modest attempt to characterize the key sectors of youth concern in India, including education, unemployment, health, youth participation, challenges, environment and sports and recreation. Since the future of a society is determined to a large extent by what the youth learns in their formative years. That is why every civilized society pays adequate attention to the needs, training, education and general upbringing of youth. Infact the maturity and quality of a society can be judged by the extent of attention it pays on youth.

Key words: Youth, Panorama, Education, Unemployment, Health, Participation, Landscape, Environment, Recreation,

Introduction

Youth, defined by the United Nations as persons between the ages of 15 and 24, is a transitional period from childhood to adulthood. By this definition, it represents almost 18 per cent of the current global population. A vast majority of the 1.2 billion youths in the world today lives in developing countries (84 per cent in 1995 which is projected to increase to 89 per cent by 2020).In 2005, 61.8 per cent of the youth population of the world lived in the Asian and Pacific region. Due to declines in fertility rates in the countries in the region, the Asia-Pacific has witnessed a "youth bulge" or a demographic bonus where 20 per cent or more of a national population are aged 15 to 24 and there is a growing cohort of working-age adults relative to the dependent population. Owing to a combination of factors, youth today are better poised than ever before to participate in, and benefit from the advancement of social, economic and political developments. Compared to previous generations, a higher proportion of young people in the region have completed primary schooling. They are achieving better education, with the gross enrolment rate at the tertiary level reaching 18 per cent and 15 per cent respectively for male and female youth. The majority of youth in the region is healthy, having survived childhood years, which only a few decades ago had considerably higher infant and child mortality. Furthermore, across the region, young people show initiatives to participate in local, national and regional development as important and equal participants, rather than as passive bystanders unable to shape their own future.[1]

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Who Are Youth?

The concept of "youth" can be defined as all the people within a specific age group, or as a state of being or even a state of mind. In this brief, we define youth as the people between ages 10 and 24. This covers a wide range of experiences and transitions that includes an early phase (between ages 10 and 14), a middle phase (between 15 and 20), and a later phase (between 21 and 24). Young people in all three age groups face major events that affect their future well-being. At the younger end of the age spectrum, youth are still children in many respects. By the time they reach the middle phase, youth are transitioning from puberty to maturity. This group can be considered adolescents. By the time a person finishes this stage of life, they have set in motion many of the events that will determine their life path. Finally, youth ages 21 through 24 are also young adults. All of these phases form the experience of being a youth. This brief addresses youth as a whole group in some sections, but specifies where the youth experience varies significantly by age group.[2]

Although the present cohort of youth has numerous advantages and assets, it also faces a complex and rapidly evolving situation where new opportunities coexist with major challenges. Fierce competition is affecting the marketplace and its rules and practices in the region. Youth often remain in a vulnerable situation and lack the requisite knowledge and skills to adapt to the changing economic and social environment. In Asia, youth made up 20.8 per cent of the labor force in 2004, but unemployed youth accounted for nearly half (49.1 per cent) of the region's jobless people. Long-term unemployment leads to a wide range of social ills to which young people are susceptible such as delinquency and substance abuse, and often feeds political unrest and violence. In addition, exacerbating the situation are very limited knowledge and poor access to health services related to the prevention of HIV infection, drug use and other health risks, particularly among those who are out-of-school in rural areas. In the past several decades or so, a large number of countries in the region have adopted national policies and legislation on youth-related issues. [3]

In today's world growing up is not what it used to be. The lives of youth present a wide range of educational, family, employment and heal experiences that depart in major ways from those of youth one or two generations ago. These different experiences can be attributed to the effects of globalization, technological advances, and widespread economic development. There are more youth in the world now than ever before, and they are concentrated in developing countries. Youth spend a longer time in school, begin work at a later age, and get married and have children later than their counterparts did 20 years ago. While in many ways the lives of young people are more complex and challenging than ever, in most countries they are also more varied, full of opportunity, and more secure than in the past. In general, modern, youth spend longer preparing for adulthood than their parents. However, the transition to the adulthood is also laden with risks and challenges.[4]

Table 01: Youth Population Ages 10-24, Total and as a Share of Population, 2006 and 2025

Regions	Share		Share	
	No. in 2006 (millions)	In 2006 (% of pop.)	No. in 2006 (millions)	In 2006 (% of pop.)
World	1,773	27	1,845	23
Developed Regions	236	19	207	17
Developing Regions	1,537	29	1,638	25
Africa	305	33	424	32
North America	71	21	74	19
Asia	1,087	28	1,063	22
Latin America/Caribbean	161	28	165	24
Europe	140	19	111	16
Oceania	8	24	8	20

Source: *L. Ashford, D. Clifton, and T. Kaneda, The World's Youth 2006(Washington, DC: Population Reference Bureau, 2006.*

Global initiatives towards youth issues

Young people in all countries are a major human resource for development, key agents for social change and driving force for economic development and technological innovation. Their talents, dynamism, imagination, ideals, considerable energies and vision are essential for the continuing development of the societies in which they live. Youth is increasingly being viewed for bringing potential benefits to other generations. The significant role that youth plays to the societies has been fully recognized in various important global initiatives.[5] At the global level, the youth development agenda received major impetus through the adoption of the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY) in 1995. The World Programme of Action for Youth represents an unprecedented initiative by the international community to recognize the value of youth as both a major human resource and as key agents for social change and economic development, and to bring the need to address obstacles to their development to the fore. It contains proposals for actions to the year 2000 and beyond to promote an improved well-being and livelihood among young people. It focuses, in particular, on measures to strengthen national capacities in the field of youth and to increase the quality and quantity of opportunities available to young people for full and constructive participation in society.[6] The Millennium Development Goals which was adopted in 2000, once again placed young people at the forefront of international attention. They consist of eight goals, with each of these goals relates directly or indirectly to the well-being of children and young people. [7] The World Development Report (2007) entitled Development and the Next Generation, which focuses for the first time on youth and development, identifies three sets of strategic policies to enhance investment in young people: 1) expanding opportunities, 2) improving capabilities, and 3) offering second chances for young people, who have fallen behind due to difficult circumstances or poor choices. According to the Report, developing countries which invest in better education, healthcare, and job training for their record numbers of young people could produce surging economic growth and sharply reduced poverty.

Youth in India

According to the Census of India 2001, the total population of India was 1,028.61 Million. Nearly 40 per cent of the population was in the age group of 13 to 35 years. The number of youth aged 15 to 24

years was 195.07 million, which accounted for 19.0 per cent of the whole population.[8] India thus has the largest youth population in the world. In India, the Government officially defines youth as persons between the ages of 13 and 35 years. For cross-country comparison and analysis, the youth definition of the United Nations, which defines youth as persons between 15 and 24 years of age, is used in this chapter. It is projected that the percentage of youth aged 15 to 24 years will decrease in the country from 19.1 per cent in 2005 to 16.7 per cent in 2025 as shown in table below:

Table 02: Youth population (15-24 years) and its prospects in India, 2005-2025

Year	Total population (Thousand)	Youth population (Thousand)	Youth percentage in population
2005	1,103,371	211,254	19.1
2010	1,183,293	224,657	19.0
2015	1,260,366	231,221	18.3
2020	1,322,032	232,353	17.4
2025	1,395,496	232,579	16.7

About 70 per cent of the youth lived in rural areas, while 30 per cent lived in urban areas in 2001. Young women and young men constituted 48 per cent and 52 per cent, respectively, of the total youth population. The Government has recognized adolescents as an important segment of the youth population group.

Table 03: Demographic Details of youth in India
Total and Percentage of Youth Population (2001) – All India and State\ Union territories-wise

State/UT	Total Population	Youth Population (13-35 Years)	
		Number	Percentage
India	1028610328	422337315	41.05
Jammu & Kashmir	10143700	4314348	42.53
Himachal Pradesh	6077900	2574931	42.36
Punjab	24358999	10396346	42.67
Chandigarh	900635	425099	47.19
Uttaranchal	8489349	3466298	40.83
Haryana	21144564	8961393	42.38
Delhi	13850507	6398304	46.19
Rajasthan	56507188	22206872	39.29
Uttar Pradesh	166197921	63725261	38.3
Bihar	82998509	30710453	37.00
Sikkim	540851	244467	45.20
Arunachal Pradesh	1097968	450543	41.03
Nagaland	1990036	909099	45.68
Manipur	2166788	961671	44.38
Mizoram	888573	390915	43.99

Tripura	3199203	1394159	43.57
Meghalaya	2318822	948404	40.90
Assam	26655528	11349077	42.57
West Bengal	80176197	34016100	42.42
Jharkhand	26945829	10525981	39.06
Orissa	36804660	15309375	41.59
Chhattisgarh	20833803	8255402	39.62
Madhya Pradesh	60348023	24197997	40.09
Gujarat	50671017	21754353	42.93
Daman & Diu	158204	85366	53.95
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	220490	103971	47.15
Maharashtra	96878627	41347821	42.68
Andhra Pradesh	76210007	32756234	42.98
Karnataka	52850562	22915253	43.35
Goa	1347668	612451	45.44
Lakshadweep	6065	25628	42.25
Kerala	31841374	13207561	41.47
Tamil Nadu	62405679	26794108	42.93
Pondicherry	974345	434474	44.59
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	356152	167600	47.05

Source: Census of India - 2001- C-Series Tables

Key Sectors of Youth Concern in India

The following areas as key sectors of concern for the youth in India:

1. **Education**

Providing appropriate education, which enables the youth to develop into good citizens of the country, should also suitably influence relevant actions of the Government and public behavior. It is recognized that 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 composite culture and national heritage. The learning process should minimize the stress and strain, which the system may exert on students, especially in the early years. The thrust of the educational system, particularly in the early years, ought to be on learning, rather than on merely qualifying in examinations and memory-based tests. The emphasis should be also on outdoor learning as an integral part of the educational process and on Physical Education, Sports, Games and Adventure activities. Academic institutions should be equipped with adequate sports and recreational facilities. Education, above the secondary level, should have a high degree of vocationalisation so as to enable the youth to acquire such requisite skills as would augment avenues of employment for them; technical institutions need to be strengthened and their number increased keeping an eye on our country's emergence as a major force in information technology. There needs to be greater uniformity in the educational system and standards in various parts of the country. Closer links should be developed between the educational system and prospective employers, on an institutional basis and career counseling should be a part of the educational

91

system, from the secondary level onwards. Programmes need to be undertaken for proper dissemination of information, amongst young men and women, in respect of career options.

Programmes should be undertaken to upgrade the existing skills of young artisans of traditional handicrafts and other products and for those who may wish to take up the same as a vocation. Education system should also have a rural orientation to address the varied needs of agriculture, agro – processing and other areas of rural economy. Educational curriculum in schools should include information on health issues, including reproductive health, HIV-AIDS and also on population issues. The gross enrollment rate of secondary and tertiary schools increased from 37.9 per cent and 6.0 per cent in 1985, to 53.5 per cent and 11.8 per cent in 2004, respectively as shown in table.

Table 4: Gross Enrolment Ratio in India, 1985-2004, Unit: Percentage

Level/year	1985	1990	1995	2000	2004
Secondary level	37.9	44.5	48.8	47.9	53.5
Tertiary level	6.0	6.2	6.6	10.2	11.8

The data also suggest that the primary education completion rate in the country raised from 75.4 per cent in 2000 to 83.6 per cent in 2004 while the repetition level declined from 4.2 per cent in 2000 to 3.2 per cent in 2004. Public expenditure on education accounted for 3.3 per cent of India's GDP in 2004. The ratio of pupils to teachers at primary and secondary levels ofeducation in 2004 stood at 40:1 and 32:1 respectively. The share of the private sector in the enrolment of students at primary and secondary levels was estimated as 17 per cent and 41.9 per cent respectively in 2004. While 48 per cent of youth were illiterate, a much higher percentage of young women (62.5 per cent) remained illiterate compared to young men (34.5 per cent) in 2004. [9]

2. Youth employment

The question of employment is, at present, of very serious concern for the Indian youth and that several social issues arise out of widespread unemployment and under-employment of the youth. This further acknowledges that the incidence of unemployment is more pronounced in the rural areas and in urban slums and calls for appropriate strategies and commensurate efforts to deal with it. The current trends suggest that the growth rate of the labour 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 miss-match 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 labour force from the rural to urban areas and limited participation of women in the work force, especially in the organized sector. The incidence of unemployment has been accentuated by advances in technology and communications, to tackle which, opportunities for self-employment need to be created. Schemes to provide" seed money" to assist viable enterprises initiated by the youth need to be drawn up. A network of youth skill training centers would need to be established to build up the capacities of the young people for income generation activities. Adequate funding for both pre-job and on-the-job training for youth by government as well as other stake holders should be ensured. For proper vocational guidance and career counseling, schools and colleges should pay adequate attention to this aspect as part of their co-curricular activities.

Table 05: Unemployment Rate among the youth (15-24 years) per 1000 persons, India

Age groups and periods	Rural Areas		Urban Areas	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
1993-1994				
15-19 years	47	33	134	168
20-24 years	67	45	139	277
15-24 years	57	39	137	223
1999-2000				
15-19 years	65	31	154	155
20-24 years	62	39	139	226
15-24 years	64	40	147	191
2004-2005				
15-19 years	79	67	140	158
20-24 years	62	93	125	258
15-24 years	71	80	133	207

Source: Employment and unemployment situation in India 2004-2005", National Sample Survey 61st Round(July 2004-June 2005), Government of India.

The high rates of youth unemployment need serious attention by policy makers not only to mitigate the frustrations faced by the new entrants into the workforce but also to minimize the likely alienation and widespread evidence of deviant behaviour of the youth throughout the country. The unemployed youth have partly been responsible for the tensions leading to the "sons-of-the soil"66 movements in different parts of the country and perhaps also the unrest in several of the border states of the country. Several schemes initiated by the Indian planners and policy-makers during the past several decades merit a careful scrutiny to assess and evaluate their impact on the employment situation. Despite high rates of economic growth for the last one decade, unemployment, particularly youth unemployment, remains one of India's biggest challenges. According to indirect estimates based on the National Sample Survey[10], almost 70 per cent of the persons on live registers of employment bureaus were in the age group of 15 to 24 years in 2004. Almost 72 per cent of unemployed youth in urban areas were looking for jobs for the first time. College-educated rural youth also seek work opportunities in urban areas. Factors such as accelerated population growth, lack of training for work, massive expansion of education, lower quality of education leading to lower employability of the educated have all contributed to the high rates of unemployment among young people. The problem has been recognized as part of the overall problem of employment creation or development.[11]

3. Youth participation

Youth is an important force. A country's social, economic, cultural and political development requires the active participation of the youth. Transformations in the functions of the State and the rise and development of non-governmental organizations have offered larger space for the youth's social participation. Youth's participation in contemporary social life and decision-making mainly focus on participation in political life, economic construction, management of state authorities in community services and public interest affairs. The youth participation is strongly felt that youth have a right and a duty to participate in issues related to the environment because they will be the ones to face the consequences in future. It was felt that today youth is not seen as a responsible section of the society, but

this notion is false and is often because they are not given the space or opportunity to act. More involvement of youth in decision-making processes at all levels would add a new perspective to policy and programmes. The participation of youth is also felt because they have to play a major role by the developed world by fulfilling their commitments and thus facilitating the developing world in following a sustainable path towards development. More educational and job opportunities in the field of environment was also felt as one of the key needs for motivating youth to work for the environment. Youth should be more involved in decision-making, because they are the ones who will be affected the most by the decisions taken by the policymakers. Youth development as "focused on building on the strengths and abilities of young people in ways that strengthen their learning and connection with community in the present, as well as encouraging young people's participation in actively shaping their futures. It is for all young people, using common processes for diverse groups. Youth development focuses on the community's investment in the wellbeing and personal development of young people, and that of young people themselves in their own futures." Young people have the highest attendance rates at cultural activities comparable to others. Society continues to give high priority to youth matters, focusing in particular on recognizing the contribution that young people can and do make as responsible citizens.

4. Challenges

Young people in the age group of 13 to 35 years constitute the most vibrant and dynamic segment of India's population. To optimally tap their potentials for national development, the Government of India pursues the twin objectives of personality-building and nation-building. Standardized programmes are not necessarily the most effective in a country with India's ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity. It is critical to meet the real needs of each youth community for programmes to be effective – these needs may differ markedly from one region to another, impeding the large-scale replicability of national programmes. It is important to support and build creative and decentralized youth service programmes that are community led. Young people have many needs – economic, educational, and social and health. Programmes sometimes tend to address one need to the exclusion of other related needs, leading to ineffective outcomes. In a country like India, where complexities of poverty, unemployment, environmental degradation and lack of opportunities combine with a scarcity of resources, it is vital for programmes to understand the integrated nature of young people's needs.

A majority of unemployed youth are persons with no prior experience or new entrants into the workforce. The major challenge before the country is to improve the employability of the young people by training them adequately for productive work, by imparting to them marketable skills. Closer association between the private sector employers and educational institutions can help to minimize the gap between needs for and supply of skills. The special schemes of the Government have not focused sufficiently on the problems and needs of the youth in the age group 15 to 24. In addition, the general tendency to under fund the programmes leads to compromises with quality. Failure to recognize fully the real costs of many of the planned activities largely explain the delays in the achievement of the goals relating to vocational education. However, the current accelerated rate of economic growth in the country could indeed generate pressures for enhancing the training of youth in skilled activities and thereby help to moderate, if not eliminate, the problem of their absorption in productive economic activities. There is a need to promote gender awareness and gender equality in the implementation of youth service programmes. It is critical for youth programmes to become more gender sensitive and to develop programmes that respond to the specific needs of young women and young men respectively.

5. Sports and Recreation

Having recognized the overall objective of the all-round development of personality of the youth and noting that Sports, Physical Education, Adventure, Recreation and related activities might often be overlooked, 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 c and appreciative of the manifold facets of nature and of social life. [12]

Research Methodology

Youth constitute a most active and dynamic section of society. The section that is most receptive of the ideas of novelty and change. They play a key in the socio - economic development of a society. For the present study the principal sources of data are the decennial censuses, the various rounds of National Sample Survey, the Central Statistical Organization, official statistics, Human Development Reports by the UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO, PRB (Population Reference Bureau), various state governments, researches and report.

Objectives of the Study

The researcher in the present study made an attempt to understand the key areas of the concern of youth. Keeping in view, the objectives of the present study are:

1. The aim of the study is to define the concept of youth.
2. To understand the key areas of concern of youth in India.
3. Improving the life prospects of young, helping to heighten their self esteem and improving their profile and perception.
4. Exploring the active youth development activities.
5. Promoting the active engagement and greater participation of young people in community activities.

Suggestions

Youth is that period when man is full of energy, ambition and zest for life. The power possessed by youth us a recognized force today. Unfortunately, a large portion of youth is without any proper direction. That is why often our young people are full of frustration. It is dangerous to let our energetic youth remain idle an as it would enhance their frustration, this may lead to chaos and disturbance. Moreover, if our youth is idle, it will be a sheer wastage of a great energy. No country can afford such wastage. What is needed is that the young men and women should be directed properly to engage in some constructive work. If this potential is tapped adequately, our massive youth power can work wonders for the national reconstruction. Youth is a driving force has never lagged behind when called upon to meet a challenge. But for this our Policy makers will have to behave in a responsible way, they should mobilize their abilities by providing them with suitable avenues, only then we can use the youth power for the task of society building. There is a need to increase political awareness and involvement among youth, particularly those youth from indigenous and other traditionally backward groups.

Conclusion

The youth today are a curious blend of materialistic and other worldly pursuits that is a feature common to all epochs. Youth in all ages have been in the vanguard of progress and social change. Thirst of freedom, impatience for a quicker pace of progress and a passion for innovation, coupled with idealism and creative fervor saw the youth in the forefront of freedom struggle. Youth represent the most vibrant section

of the society. They play a pivotal role in socio-economic changes and development of the society. A nation can progress only when the energy of youth is channelised into constructive work. They should also be encouraged to participate in development process which is a key for the progress of a nation on one hand and society as a whole. It is imperative that youth are given a major role in the process of development.

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