

DAILY POST

JOURNALISM OF HOPE

"We cannot always build the future for our youth but we can build our youth for the future." - Franklin D. Roosevelt

India's youth

We need a policy framework to make the most of our youth to make a New India.

DR MM GOEL

To make Indian youth in the age group 15-29 years constituting 27.5 per cent of the total population called demographic dividend as a vibrant constructive force to be useful and careful manpower, we require right policies with multi-dimensional approach with strategic investments in human capital. This calls for understanding, analysing, interpreting the data on youth which justifies Youth Development Index (YDI) in India. YDI is a composite measure of the status of youth for better insights in a single snapshot. A pioneering attempt has been made by the Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development (RGNIYD) in bringing out Youth Development Report since 2010. Subsequently, keeping in view of the need for updating the approach for the latest period, RGNIYD prepared the India Youth Development Index and Report 2017. The objective of constructing the India Youth Development Index (YDI) 2017 is to track the trends in youth development across the states and identify the gaps for policy intervention.

RGNIYD used the latest definition of youth as used in National Youth Policy 2014 (India) and World Youth Development Report of Commonwealth (15-29 years) as well as used the Commonwealth Indicators in order to facilitate global comparison.

In YDI 2017, the first five dimensions are retained same as that of Global YDI. The indicators and weights have been modified based on the availability of data at sub-national level and the importance of the indicators in explaining Youth Development with the aim of capturing the multidimensional properties that indicate progress in youth development at the sub-national level, that is, state level. Global YDI is different from YDI constructed for India in one



unique way. YDI for India adds a new domain, social inclusion, to assess the inclusiveness of societal progress as structural inequalities persist in Indian society. This construction helps to identify the gaps that require intensification of policy intervention. The YDI 2017 focuses on six key dimensions including education (education expenditure as percent of GSDP, youth literacy rate, education level), health and wellbeing (teenage pregnancy rate, youth mortality rate, youth morbidity rate, physical fitness of youth, alcohol abuse rate by youths, tobacco abuse rate by youths), work (percentage of youth not in school/work, share of youth unemployment to total unemployment, labour force participation rate, employment level), political participation (share of youth participating in legislature, share of youth electors), civic participation (share of youths participating in NYKS, Share of college students participating in NSS and NCC and social justice (social inequality index, share of youth with disability).

The Youth Gender Development Index (YGDI) is dictated by the indicators for which sex wise data are available. Thus YGDI is based on only three dimensions i.e., Education, Health and Work. The range of YDI score is 0 to 1, the index value to closure to 0 indicates the low youth development and value closer to 1 reflects high youth development. At the national level, YDI 2017 value is 0.569 with wide variation

ranging from 0.466 (Bihar) to 0.689 (Himachal Pradesh) among the major states. YDI score for male is 0.625 and for female is 0.535. At the national level YDI score belongs to a medium category, nearly 50 percent of the states belong to either high or very high category. Nearly 33 percent (six major states and four minor states) get classified into a high category.

The Youth Gender Development Index (YGDI) is 0.856, indicating 14.4 percent absolute deviation from gender parity showing positive signs concerning gender disparity. YGDI is based on only three dimensions including education, health and work, as gender wise data was not available with respect to other three dimensions i.e., political participation, civic participation and social inclusion. Among the Major states, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh top the list of better performers with even female youth outweighing male YDI. Bihar, Jharkhand and Rajasthan score the least, showing the largest gap between male and female YDI. Except for Nagaland, Tripura and Goa with respect to all other minor states, GYDI is greater than one, implying a better YDI for females than males. The Youth Education Index (YEI) at the national level scores 0.513. The Youth Health Index (YHI) at the national level is 0.632. The Youth Work Index (YWI) at the national level stands with the score of 0.572. The Youth Civic Participation Index (YCPI) score at the national level is 0.191. The Youth Political

Participation Index (YPPI) at the national level scores 0.436 implying that there is more scope for the youth to be politically active. The Youth Social Inclusion Index (YSII) at the national level scores is 0.785. This index reflects the extent of social inclusivity of marginalized sections in various social indicators of development.

The YDI scores of various domains have shown that there is a need for improvement in youth development. The scores also indicate the persistence of gender inequality across domains in youth development despite the various central and state policies towards women empowerment. This remains a major challenge for the country inviting special attention for strategic interventions. Widening disparities across the states resulting in divergence in youth development serves as a barrier for the optimal utilisation of youth resource for the societal development.

The policy implications from the 2017 report on YDI include effective state intervention for maintaining data on all the indicators on their websites. We need to reorient the education policy in tune with National Youth Policy (NYP) 2014. For employability of youth, we need to increase return on training investment (ROTI) with communication skills, time management and spiritual input along with abilities of head and heart, skills and knowledge. We need change in the mind-set at all levels with accountability, transparency and morality. We have to promote gender budgeting for women empowerment and create gender neutral literature and books for Indian youth to say no to gender inequalities. Training and equipping youth with necessary acumen for effectively dealing with political and governance issues in tune with NYP 2014 is the need of the hour.

(The writer is Director, RGNIYD, Sriperumbudur, Tamil Nadu. Views are strictly his personal)