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Help *Anna Daatas* and become *Anand Daatas* for Happy Transformation of Modern India

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Youth Development Index: A Necessary Innovation for Development of the Country

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India is in a unique phase of demographic revolution, with its shift in age structure, resulting in the largest cohort of working age population with the opportunity for demographic dividend. The youth population in the age group 15-29 years constitute 27.5 per cent of the total population of India. The population under the age of 35 constituting about 65 per cent of the total population contributes 34 per cent of the Gross National Income. According to one of the estimates one million youth are expected to enter labour market every year peaking at 653 million in 2030. The youth as a huge human potential as well trained productive human resource can be used as a catalyst force for sustainable human development and economic growth. To make youth as a vibrant constructive force to be useful and careful manpower, we require right policies with multidimensional 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. It is pertinent to mention that Human Development Index (HDI) could not help review the status of youth as youth specific indices were ignored therein.

Youth Development Index (YDI) is a composite measure of the status of youth, designed to enable the users to gain better insights in a single snapshot. The creation of a Youth Development Index is expected to contribute in the following ways:

- Recognize youth as a population category that requires separate consideration and raise visibility of youth issues in public and draw increased attention to youth development agenda.
- Enable comparisons across geographical areas and categories, as human development index has done in comparing the development situation across regions, nations and localities.
- Measure the achievements made besides serving as an advocacy tool for youth development.
- Facilitates to identify priority areas for development of Policy and Interventions.

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As the depository of knowledge on youth related data which facilitates formulation of policies and programmes a pioneering attempt was made by the Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development (RGNIYD) in bringing out Youth Development Report – 2010. Subsequently, keeping in view 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 2017 is to track the trends in Youth Development across the States and identify the gaps for policy intervention.

The earlier approach had some limitations. In order to overcome these limitations and to have a measure in line with the Global Youth Development Index, an attempt was made by RGNIYD to construct India Youth Development Index 2017. Constructing Youth Development Index for the year 2017 was done using 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 using the Commonwealth Indicators in order to facilitate Global comparison.

In the India Youth Development Index 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 i.e., 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.

YDI 2017 focuses on six key dimensions viz., Education (Education expenditure as % of GSDP, Youth Literacy Rate, Education Level), Health and Well Being (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.

The Global Youth Development Index and Report 2016 examines the state of youth development in 183 countries, including 49 of the 53 Commonwealth countries. It covers five domains, measuring young people's levels of education, health and wellbeing, employment and opportunity, as well as civic and political participation. It also provides a snapshot of progress between 2010 and 2015.

These domains have remained same across time points but indicators defining those domains have undergone a slight change. The weights of domains have changed and thus allow comparing only the overall YDI position (ranks) of countries leaving aside the YDI scores. YDI's rank of India at the global level in 2016 was 133 and it has gone up from 98 in 2013 among 161 countries. Its position is 25 among the 51 commonwealth countries. India Global YDI score remains at 0.548 which posits India in Medium category.

At the national level, the Youth Development Index 2017 value is 0.569 with wide variation ranging from 0.466 (Bihar) to 0.689 (Himachal Pradesh) among the major states. Among the minor states, Pondicherry and Goa exceeds the value of Himachal Pradesh. 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 per cent of the states belong to either high or very high category. Pondicherry, Goa and Himachal Pradesh belong to Very high category and Bihar belongs to a Low category. Nearly 33 per cent (i.e., 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 per cent absolute deviation

from gender parity showing positive signs concerning gender disparity. (Gender Youth Development Index is based on only three dimensions viz., 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. Among the minor states, Pondicherry, Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya score the highest, while Nagaland, Tripura and Goa show poor performance. 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. Among the Major states, Kerala, Himachal Pradesh and Tamil Nadu stand out as top performers. Bihar, Jharkhand and Rajasthan occupy the least ranks. Among the minor states, Mizoram tops the list, with Pondicherry in the second place. All BIMARU states fare poorly in YEI. Chhattisgarh relatively performs better than Karnataka and Haryana in YEI. Among the minor states, Mizoram tops the list, with Pondicherry in the second place, whereas Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya occupy the bottom positions.

The Youth Health Index (YHI) at the national level is 0.632 with Himachal Pradesh, Kerala and Uttarakhand being the top three performers. West Bengal, Assam and Chhattisgarh occupy the last positions among the major states. Among the minor states, Goa, Delhi and Pondicherry are in the top position while Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Tripura were in the lower position. Excepting for Haryana and Karnataka, the performance of all the other states with regard to female health is better than that of male, thereby showing GDI being more than one. Odisha, though its performance was average with respect to both males and females, it has taken the first position in Health GDI. Punjab and Tamil Nadu, which had better performance also had high Gender Youth Development Index with gender being biased towards females.

The Youth Work Index (YWI) at the national level stands with the score of 0.572. Gujarat, Maharashtra and Karnataka are the top performers among the major states while Assam, Kerala and Bihar ranked low with respect to work among the youth. Kerala's presence

among the low ranking states is an interesting addition to the debate on Kerala's model of development.

The Youth Civic Participation Index (YCPI) score at the national level is 0.191. Among the major states, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab and Uttarakhand top the list of better performers, while West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar scored poorly. Among the minor states, Pondicherry, Sikkim and Mizoram perform better while Delhi, Tripura and Meghalaya have ranked low.

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. Among the major states, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand top the list, whereas, Kerala, Bihar and Himachal Pradesh ranked the least. Among southern states, political participation among youth is relatively lesser. Among the minor states, Arunachal Pradesh, Delhi and Meghalaya perform relatively better, Goa, Pondicherry and Nagaland ranked low on youth political participation index. States like Arunachal Pradesh and Jharkhand showed a lower ranking when all the social indicators have an active presence. Kerala and Goa have the poor presence of youth in polity, despite performing better in development indicators like Health and Education.

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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. Among the major states, Assam, Himachal Pradesh and Kerala show good performance with respect to social inclusion whereas, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha ranked low on this index. Almost all the minor states show a relatively better performance than almost all the major

states. Among the minor states, Mizoram, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh top the list wherein, Pondicherry, Sikkim and Manipur were in the bottom concerning social inclusion.

As an effective decision – support tool, the YDI-17 will enable the policy makers track the national and the regional progress as well setbacks in youth development policies, planning, priority identification and implementation strategies. Besides providing insights to suggest alternatives and options, it also aids in judicious allocation of resources.

The YDI scores of various domains has 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 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 for creating a structure of political institutions at various levels. □