

# National Youth Policy in India

## Abstract

The National Youth Policy, 2003 reiterates the commitment of the entire nation to composite and all round development of the young sons and daughters of India and seeks to establish an all Indian prospective to fulfill their legitimate aspirations so that they are all strong of heart, body and mind in successfully accomplishing the challenging tasks of national reconstruction and social changes that lie ahead.

**Keywords** National, Policy, Formulated, Galvanize

## Introduction

The earlier National Youth Policy was formulated in 1988. The socio-economic conditions in the country have since undergone a significant change and have been shaped by wide-ranging technological advancement. The National Youth Policy 2003 is designed to galvanize the youth to rise up to the new challenges, keeping in view the global scenario, and aims at motivating them to be active and committed participants in the exciting task of National Development.

The Policy is based on recognition of the contribution that the youth can, and should, make to the growth and well-being of the community and endeavours to ensure effective co-ordination between the policies, programmes and delivery systems of the various Ministries, Departments and other Agencies. The thrust of the Policy centres around 'Youth Empowerment' in different spheres of national life.

For India to occupy her rightful place in the Comity of Nations and to meaningfully discharge the manifold obligations thereto, it would be imperative to ensure the effective pursuit of youth development programmes which promote personality development and qualities of citizenship and enhance commitment to 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 interrelated values and principles as its basic premises.

## Rationale

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 and are enabled to contribute to socio-economic development, it is essential for an appropriate policy framework to be in place to harness the energies of the youth in this tasks.

Recognizing, further, that youth development is a multi-faceted concept, it is equally necessary that all the relevant agencies, including the Ministries and Departments of the Central and State Government, and local self Government bodies and Panchayati Raj institutions devise their plans and programmes bearing and integrated approach in this behalf, with the State Agencies striving to accelerate the formulation and implementation of programmes.

An important indicator of the success of such programmes being the stake of the beneficiaries in the results of the same, this Policy also stresses that the youth of the country should enjoy greater participation in the process of decision-making and execution at local and higher levels. Such participation would be facilitated by identifiable structures, transparent procedures and wider representation of the youth in appropriate bodies, with the emphasis being more on working with the youth than for the youth.

## The Definition of Youth

This policy will cover all the youth in the country in the age group of 13 to 35 years. It is acknowledged that since all the persons within this age group are unlikely to be one homogenous group, but rather a conglomeration of sub-group with differing 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, which is a major part of the adolescent age group, will be regarded as a separated constituency.

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The number of youth in the age group of 13-35 years, as per the 1991 Census, was estimated at about 34 crores, and about 38 crores in 1997, which is anticipated to increase to about 51 crores by the year 2016. The percentage of youth in the total population, which, according to the 1996 Census projections, is estimated to be about 37 per cent in 1997, is also likely to increase to about 40 per cent by the year 2016. The availability of human resources 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

The objectives of the National Youth Policy are:

1. To instil 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;
2. To develop qualities of citizenship and dedication to community service amongst all sections of the youth;
3. To promote awareness, amongst the youth, in the fields of Indian history and heritage, arts and culture;
4. To provide the youth with proper educational and training opportunities and to facilitate access to information in respect of employment opportunities and to other services, including entrepreneurial guidance and financial credit;
5. 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 substances abuse, wards diff disease (like HIV/AIDS), ensures measures for de-addiction and main-streaming of the affected persons and enhances the availability of sports and recreational facilities as constructive outlets for the abundant energy of the youth;
6. To promote awareness, amongst the youth, in the fields of Indian history and heritage, arts and culture;
7. To provide the youth with proper educational and training opportunities and to facilitate access to information in respect of employment opportunities and to other services, including entrepreneurial guidance and financial credit;
8. 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 programmes;
9. To create an international perspective in the youth and to involve them in promoting peace and understanding and the establishment of a just global economic order;
10. To develop youth leadership in various socio-economic and cultural spheres and to encourage the involvement of non-governmental organizations, co-operatives and non-formal groups of young people; and
11. To promote a major participatory role for the youth in the protection and preservation of

nature, including natural resources, to channelise their abundant energies in community service so as to improve the environment and foster a scientific, inquisitive reasoning and rational attitude in the younger generation and to encourage the youth to undertake such travel excursion as would better acquaint them with cultural harmony, amidst diversity in India and overseas.

### Thrust Areas of the Policy

Youth empowerment : The policy recognizes that in order for the youth to effectively participate in decision making processes, it is essential that they are better equipped with requisite knowledge, skill and capabilities. Towards this end, the Policy envisions the following

1. Attainment of higher educational levels and expertise by the youth, in line with their abilities and aptitudes, and access to employment opportunities accordingly;
2. Adequate nutrition for the full development of physical and mental potential and the creation of an environment which promotes good health, and ensures protection from disease and unwholesome habits;
3. Development of youth leadership and its involvement in programmes and activities pertaining to National Development.
4. 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. "Youth empowerment, gender justice, training and employment, health, environment, sports and recreation, art and culture, science and technology would be the thrust areas to be addressed." - Vikram Verma, Union Minister for Youth Affair.

### Privilege of Youth

The policy acknowledges that the youth of the country should be assured of the following

- a. Appropriate education and training which enables them to render themselves socially useful and economically productive;
- b. Gainful employment and adequate opportunities for personal development and advancement for those not currently in employment;
- c. Requisite shelter and a clean environment, as also basic health services of quality;
- d. Social defense and protection from all manner of exploitation;
- e. Suitable participation in decision-making bodies which are concerned with issues relating to the youth and with socio-economic and cultural matters;
- f. Sufficient allocation of public funds for youth development; and
- g. Access to sports, physical education, adventure and recreational opportunities.

### Education

The policy acknowledges that the objective of 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 behaviour.

It is recognized that the need of the educational system to instill, in the youth, an abiding sense of patriotism and values orientated 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.

This policy emphasizes that the learning process should minimize the stress, 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 policy lays emphasis on outdoor learning as an integral part of the education 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 socialization as to enable the youth to acquire those requisite skills, which would augment avenues of employment for them. Technical institutions need to be strengthened and their number increased keeping an eye on the 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 counselling should be a part of the educational system, from the secondary level onwards. Programmes need to be undertaken for proper determination of information, among 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 and other areas of rural issues.

Youth clubs and Mahila Mandal should be encouraged to involve their members in programs like 'Seva Shiksha Abhiyan' and Total Literacy Campaign for generalization of primary education and spread of literacy, and to organize activities to promote book reading habits among the youth.

### **Training and Employment**

This Policy recognizes that 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 Policy 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 can be described as 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 labour 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 with advances in technology and communications. To tackle this issue, 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. Network of youth skill training centres 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 stakeholders should be ensured. For proper vocational guidance and career counselling, schools and colleges should pay adequate attention to this aspect as part of their co-curricular activities.

Government, in conjunction with youth organizations, will develop training programmes for young people in the rural areas, based on their needs. Special schemes would also be developed for young women, youth with disabilities and for young people returning from the urban to the rural areas, alongside flexibility in training systems and collaboration between training institutions and potential employers.

Co-operative schemes involving Self Help Group of young people in the production and marketing of goods and services would be encouraged and strengthened with government support. Banks and Co-operatives would be advised to make identifiable allocations of soft credit to young people and their Self Help Groups and micro-credit adopted as a strategy to enable young women and men, in the rural area, to undertake fruitful economic ventures.

### **Science and Technology**

As adaptation of scientific and technological principles and developments, to maximize the use of local resources, is central to empowerment in the quality of life. The Policy recognizes the importance of emerging, modern technologies, particularly in the field of information technology and electronic media, in enabling the youth to achieve their life objectives in all sectors of their interest.

The Policy also recognizes that young scientists and technologists should be extended adequate facilities for research, and that the contribution of the private sector in this field should be encouraged. The National Youth Policy, therefore, provides for

1. Review of policies in respect of the school curriculum and the non-formal education sector so that science may be popularized amongst all sections of the youth,
2. Support to providing exposure of the youth to the scientific temper and way of life,
3. Development of mechanisms within the system to identify the train gifted youth, as early as possible, in the fields of science and technology,

4. The best and the most positive use of information and communications technology, as well as all forms of media, including the electronic media, for youth development as well as for promoting and protecting the richness of India's culture,
5. Promoting a multi-sectoral approach involving, inter-alia, the private sector and NGOs, to orient the youth towards scientific and technological studies and research.
6. Ensuring co-ordination between the various Government Ministeries / Departments and Scientific Organizations / Institutions dealing with youth development programmes,
7. Upgrading science curricula in institutions of learning to inculcate the scientific approach amongst all sections of younger generation,
8. Linking the projects of the young scientist to the problems of the people and ensuring better interaction between labs and the industry and
9. Documentation of the large repository of physical and knowledge based resources within the country to prevent their piracy by vested interests.

#### **Implementation Mechanism**

The policy envisions the following implementation mechanism

- a. All ministries / 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,
- b. A broad based National Committee on Youth Policy and Programmes is contemplated to review and 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,
- c. The Union Ministry on Youth Affairs and Sports (with the guidance of this Committee) will be the Nodal Ministry for all such programmes and schemes and will oversee the implementation of the provisions of the Policy,
- d. An effective mechanism to coordinate the activities of the Central Ministries / Departments, the State Government and Community and Youth Organizations, would be evolved in order to facilitate timely execution of youth development programmes and
- e. 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.

#### **Review**

The National Youth Policy, 2003 would be reviewed after 5 years from the date of commencement of implementation.

#### **Conclusion**

The Policy should be, enabling the youth of India to march forward, with confidence in themselves and faith in the future, basing their conviction on our ancient heritage but utilizing their skill, knowledge, energies and idealism to harness the fruits of science

and appropriate technology in building a new and vibrant India.

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