

# PROBLEMS FACED BY YOUTH IN INDIA: A REVIEW

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## **Abstract:**

*Today's youth are the future of tomorrow. Youth is the most energetic section of the population of a nation. They hold the capacity to alter the nation at all through the utilisation of their energy. As reported by Census 2011, youth in India constitutes one fifth i.e. 19.1% of the total population and was expected to have 34.33% share of youth in total population by 2020. Hence, India has substantial amount of potentialities which can be manifested in the country's development as a whole in future. Although Government of India has been constantly evolving policies and programmes for youth welfare; hitherto, youth are facing many serious problems. Therefore utmost care of this section is need of the hour and for that discussion on the problems of youth is a topic of worth discussion to immediate reach at the solutions. This article is an attempt in this aspect through review of existing literature.*

**Keywords:** Future, India, Problem, Welfare, Youth.

## **I. Introduction:**

“All the power is within you: You can do anything and everything.”- Swami Vivekananda.

Youth being enthusiastic, vibrant, innovative and dynamic in nature is the most important section of the population. Youth shows strong passion, motivation and will power which also make them the most valuable human resource for fostering economic, cultural and political development of a nation. (Youth in India, 2017). Youth holds the potentiality which can be manifested in the country's advancement as a whole. Flawless materialisation of the potentialities of this section is constructive for the nation owing to the enlarging youth population in India. As reported by Census 2011, youth in India constitutes one fifth i.e. 19.1% of the total population and was expected to have 34.33% share of youth in total population by 2020. According to “World Population Prospects: The 2015 revision” Population Database of United Nations Population Division, India has the world's highest number of 10-24 years olds, with 242 million- despite having a smaller population than China, which has 185 million young people. (Youth in India, 2017). Youth are being referred to as the ‘torchbearers’ of the 2030 Agenda and have a pivotal role to play both as beneficiaries of actions and policies under the Agenda and as a partners and participants in its implementation. (World Youth Report, 2018). Youth as having specified attributes needs specified care and attention to overcome their specified challenges in order to build the country's greatest workforce and the world's as well. Despite the Government of India's policy

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initiatives and programmes youth are facing some treacherous problems yet. In this youthful nation unemployment is rampant among this section. Other problems come basically due to the generation gap and other physical, mental, emotional changes and the dramatically changing society. Constant reports of media personnel's regarding the issues of youth have made it an issue worth thinkable. Consequently much discussion on the topic is significant for discovering the solutions. With this objective the article is written by reviewing the existing literature related to the topic.

### **Meaning and Definition of the term Youth:**

Cambridge dictionary meaning of the term youth is the period of one's life when one is young, or the state of being young. United Nations defines 'youth' as persons between 15 and 24 years of age. In the National Youth Policy-2003, 'youth was defined a person of age between 13-35 years, but in the National Policy-2014, the youth age-group is modified as 15-29 years. Jeffrey Jensen Arnett in his book "Emerging Adulthood" defined this age (18-29) as emerging adulthood with some distinctive characteristics of emerging adults of American society and segregated from young adulthood. Curtin defines youth as a phase when a person moves from a time of dependence (childhood) to independence (adulthood).

There are some distinctive features of this age group specified by the notable researchers which helps in better understanding of the same. Curtin defines youth as a phase when a person moves from a time of dependence (childhood) to independence (adulthood) and identifies four distinct aspects of this move:

- Leaving the parental home and establishing new living arrangements;
- Completing full time education;
- Forming close, stable personal relationship outside of the family, often resulting in marriage and children.
- Testing the labour market, finding work and possibly settling into a career, and achieving a more or less sustainable livelihood.

R. A. Anderson has listed the general characteristics of youth Social and Emotional Development as follows:

- Labile Emotions
- Personal identity
- Peer relationship
- Independence and Testing Boundaries
- Self Centred Attitudes

Jeffrey Jensen Arnett specified five key features of this stage (18-29):

- Identity exploration: answering the question "who am I?" and trying out various life options, especially in love and works;
- Instability, in love, work, and place of residence;
- Self-focus, as obligations to others reach a life-span low point;
- Feeling in between, in transition, neither adolescent nor adult; and

- Possibilities/ optimism, when hopes flourish and people have an unparalleled opportunity to transform their lives.

Arnnet mentioned these characteristics by considering the emerging adults of American society; nevertheless these are applicable to some cultural contexts in developing countries. Hence, also in India.

Erik Erikson termed the period of young adulthood (19-40) as a stage of Intimacy v/s isolation in this theory of psychosocial development.

#### **Problems faced by Youth in India:**

As we know, n numbers of policies, programmes and schemes have been enacted by Government of India (GOI) for youth welfare. Undoubtedly, these are very much beneficial for well being of the aforesaid section. Apart from that, here is a brief discussion of the problems faced by today's youth in India which may cause hinder in the development of human resource in the country.

- **Unemployment:** Unemployment is a consequential problem among the youth in India. Unemployment is defined by the Bureau of Labour Statistics "as people who do not have actively looked for the work in last four weeks and are currently." Generally a person who is "willing and able to work" but is not getting the work is said to be unemployment. (Singh, et al, 2018). In 2019, the estimated youth unemployment rate in India was at 10.51 percent. For the past decade, India's youth unemployment rate has been hovering around the 10 percent mark (Plecher, 2020). Without analysing the problems the solutions cannot be reached. Although there are different types of unemployment in India, the underlying reasons of all can be found same. Singh et al (2018) mentioned the following causes of youth unemployment in India :

i) **Inappropriate Educational System:** There is no correlation between education and employment as far as Indian planning is concerned.

ii) **Lack of Human Resources planning:** The employment planning of the government is no adequate in comparison to population growth.

iii) **Unawareness of Opportunities:** People are not thinking broadly while they are choosing their degrees to study and while they are searching for jobs. Growing of network is important in this aspect.

iv) **Lack of Training Centres:** Due to lack of training centres everyone depends on other person for job.

v) **Increase in Labour Force:** Labour force in India has been rapidly increasing with the increasing population.

vi) **Shortage of Jobs:** Shortage of jobs forced youths either to option for unskilled or casual work in the informal sector. Many who could not afford to go for further education opted for self employment with extremely low returns.

vii) **Excessive Foreign Technology:** In India there has been a pronounced liking for foreign collaborations, mostly package deals comprising technical services, consultancy, design and also equipment. This has brought technological unemployment in the economy which aggravated the problem.

**viii) Lack of Entrepreneurship:** In India most of the youth are schooled for taking up jobs and their mind set is turned mostly on getting a job. The pre-graduate and graduate levels do not focus on self-employment.

**ix) Emphasis on Capital Intensive projects:** Use of automatic machines and other sophisticated equipments results in large scale unemployment.

**x) Slow growth process:** In India production has expanded and the economy has grown. As a result of this employment opportunities have expanded. But these opportunities were not adequate enough to solve the problem of unemployment.

Covid-19 crisis has also resulted job loss among many of the youths in India who basically worked in private sectors.

- **Depression:** Depression is a major problem among youth population around the world. As the reports of United News of India (2018), the depression rates in the country in the country have increased rapidly over the last decade and recently 75 percent of the youth affected are under the age 25. WHO reported that India is the most depressed country in the world (Times of India, 2018). Prof. Rajesh Sagar, Department of Psychiatry, All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) has warned about the grave situation. He said, "India has the largest youth population in the world and a good number of this population is under the impact of depression." Some of the reasons of depression among the youth extracted from the report on United Times of India (2018) are-

- i) Lack of care and time from parents
- ii) Fast changing society and competition
- iii) Being the single child of parents and family they do not learn peer sharing and later on it becomes a major cause of depression.

- iv) Family pattern is another source of depression among youths, the rising number of divorces, single mother/father family structures, etc, are often resulting in children being unable to cope with the changing world.

- v) Prevailing of some symptoms such as lack of interest in the daily routine, fatigue, sleeplessness, confusion and decrease in cognitive power etc. for more than two weeks can lead to depression.

- **Suicide:** Severe depression results in suicide. In most countries suicide mortality increases with age. In India, the opposite happens. The suicide rate among youth adults aged 15-29 is more than three times the national average. This makes us a country with one of the highest suicide rates among youth in the world. (Kaushal, N., 2019). Every hour one student commits suicide in India, with about 28 such suicides reported every day, according to the data compiled by National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). The NCRB data shows that 10,159 students died by suicide in 2018, an increase from 9,905 in 2017, and 9,478 in 2016 (Garai, S., 2018). Academic stress factors are one of the common factors of suicide among youths. As per the data from the Department of Higher Education, under the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), 27 students across 10 Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) committed suicide between 2014 and 2019. As reported by Indian Express on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2020, 31 year old research scholar found hanging in IIT-Kharagpur hostel Kota, primarily known as a coaching centre hub, has seen a series of student deaths every year. As per

the data available from the district administration, 58 students ended their lives in Kota between 2013 and 2017. (Garai, S., 2018). Among the LGBTQ society, bullying is the major and common factor of youth suicide. In India, relationship problems, marital problems, economic or monetary stress related are also observed as causes of suicide among youth. Media also reported about many suicide cases during the nationwide lockdown period. As per the report of Times of India, a 25 year old youth, who was put in home quarantine on May 13, hung himself to death. NDTV reported on 29<sup>th</sup> May, 2020 that a 29 year old woman allegedly committed suicide by setting herself on fire in Maidan Garhi area of the national capital after her husband refused to buy a smartphone for the online classes being conducted by the school of their children. Preksha Mehta (25) committed suicide in depression and her worry about not getting work due to Covid -19 pandemic (India.com, May 28, 2020). As such media are constantly reporting the terrible cases.

- **Materialism:** Ward and Wackman (1971) stated materialism as “an orientation emphasizing possession and money for personal happiness and social progress”. The new generation of India is showing signs of high materialism (Gupta, 2011; Lindridge and Dibb, 2003; Larsen et al., 1999; Venkatesh, A., 1994). Youth in India does not consider possession of material goods as a taboo- instead, they admit its significance, express their individuality by acquiring it and draw great deal of satisfaction from material goods. (Machanda, R. et al. 2015). Huge consumption of internet and usage of social media affects the level of materialism amongst youth. Youth spend their huge time on the internet, connecting to social media and hence, time consumption has an indirect relationship in increasing materialistic value. There is a significant relationship between the attraction of celebrities endorsed and an increase in the level of materialism. (Neve, M., et al. 2020). Researchers found out that materialistic attitude are the main cause that gives rise to compulsive buying tendencies (Dittmar 2005; Richins, 2004).

- **Substance abuse:** Now- a-days substance abuse has become a short cut to get relief from all the stress among the youth. As per the report Magnitude of Substance Use in India 2019 (Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment Government of India), a substantial number of people (between 10-75 years of age) use psychoactive substances in India, basically adult men bear the brunt of substance use disorders. As many as 19% of alcohol users consume alcohol in a dependent pattern. About 0.25% of the population suffers from cannabis dependence. Apart from that inhalant use in India is also very notable. Educational institutions in Kerala seem to have become a hotbed of drug peddlers as 223 cases have been registered under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act (NDPS) till 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2019 (The Indian Express). The Centre has identified 272 districts as those hugely affected by drug abuse and it is readying to roll out a Rs 336 Crore national action plan this year for a ‘nasha mukt Bharat’ (addiction- free India), especially across colleges and universities, to counter the growing menace.

- **Stress:** The word stress is used quite often in today’s world. Stress levels seem to high in India compared to other countries, both developed and emerging, says a survey conducted by Cigna TTK Health Insurance (Economic Times, 2018). Career insecurity, choosing the right partner, broken of intimate relationship, financial problem, occupational problem, increasing competition, etc. are the major sources of stress among youths in India. Most of the students often stressed due to

academic burden of assignments. Extensive numbers of research in this field have been conducted by understanding the deep rooted problem. Geogr. R., & Shari, B. (2018) found from their study that youth are more stressed due to issues related to intimate relationship and least stress in issues connected to job.

- **Parental Pressure:** Most of the time it is observed that parents expect the best of best from their children without considering their strengths and limitations. When students are burdened with such expectations they lost their freedom and most of the time many of their talents other than academic progress remain inherent. Sleep deprivation, eating disorder, excessive worrying, cheating, burnout, loss of interest in hobbies, committing suicide and withdrawal from friends and family are major consequential problems. Most of the time parents compare their child with other which may lower the self-esteem of the child, which is very harmful.

- **Instant Gratification:** Delayed gratification refers to the ability to put off something mildly fun or pleasurable now, in order to gain something that is more fun, pleasurable, or rewarding later. Today's youth run after instant gratification rather than waiting for the better and delayed result; which in turn results in depression, stress, suicide etc. After a challenging first 20-25 years of life, youngsters get financial freedom through salary. By opting for instant gratification of wants, they subconsciously try to become happy. In a world full of credit cards and loans on a click, instant gratification costs them financially. When they realize this truth some years down the line, they are busy dealing with repayments. (Rego, A., 2018). Delayed gratification increase the power of self-control, resilient and finally happy and satisfied for the rest of life. We all have many live examples on delayed gratification.

## II. Conclusion:

Although the problems of youth are not limited to the above mentioned only; still these are among the influential. Only the Government's initiatives can't alone help for reaching at the solutions and materialisation of the dream of better tomorrow. Parents from the initial level must bear the responsibility in this aspect. Guidance and Counselling Cell in all the educational institutions is very much essential in this aspect. Every one of us can contribute towards youth development and the country as a whole through serious effort.

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