<u>Point of View</u>

Longing to Belong: Social Inclusion of Youth on the Margins of Society

NANJUNDA

Abstract

It is reported that in India, the youth population of 18 to 30 years represents 48.1% of the total population of the country. Also it is found that among all the youth, 51.3% are economically active while the remaining 49.4% are economically inactive i.e. are outside the labor market, and almost a quarter (24.2%) of the youth population is neither studying nor working. In addition, opportunities for young people to access suitable work are inadequate because of their education, lack of skill, divergent career and by the disparity between the training offered and the experience required by the current labour market of the country. Youth from marginalized sections are facing numerous issues and problems for social inclusion. It is high time researchers, stakeholders and policy-makers discuss the possibility of inclusive policies and avenues for youth.

Author: Nanjunda, Centre for Study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy, University of Mysore, Mysore–570 006, India. Email; ajdmeditor@yahoo.co.in

BACKGROUND

In the 1995 Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development approaches, an inclusive society was defined as a "society for all in which every individual, each with rights and responsibilities, has an active role to play". Social inclusion, 'is the process of improving the terms for individuals and groups to take part in society (UN chapter). Social inclusion aims to empower poor and marginalised people to take advantage of burgeoning global opportunities. It ensures that people have a voice in decisions which influence their lives and that they enjoy equal access to

markets, services and political, social and physical spaces' (World Bank). On other hand youths may also be constituted as a vital segment in case of poor and marginalised sections. Experts felt science and technology with novelty and creativity normally contributes to social inclusion by creating knowledge that links various societies and further strengthens the existing social structure. Also it is a useful way of making sure that social inclusiveness and appealing groups, particularly the youth, can contribute in various ways.

Youth from the marginalized sections are fatalities of plentiful and diverse human rights contravention. This is the time to go beyond anti-discrimination designed to prevent unequal treatment of young people and to get prospect of minority young people for prospect and better and speedy inclusion in the society. Effectual human rights education gives knowledge about human rights and the mechanisms that defend them; however it also procures the skills wanted to endorse, protect and apply human rights in daily life. Human rights education also creates the attitudes and behaviors desirable to support individual rights for all sections of the society. The aim of any new policy must be to augment youth knowledge. This creates consciousness about social exclusion, its causes and remedies and cross cultural interactions in youth of minority by initiating tangible behavior bringing optimistic community modification into the local circumstance. Geographical and cultural specific policy may serve the purpose.

Recently Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his Independence Day speech(2015) emphasized the 'Make in India' concept. The Finance Minister Arun Jaitley in his budget speech (2014) had announced a Rs.12,000(INR) crore startup fund for entrepreneurship development. India has definitely seen a lot of progress since the LPG era, creating a lot of job opportunities and benefits to its citizens and youth are benefiting from this. Improvement and development in several areas have helped in economic growth helping youth to get more employment. There are still many belonging to the general populace, community or group who are yet to feel and experience the benefits of growth and development happening around them.

SOCIAL INCLUSION INITIATIVES
a. Societal Engagement and Involvement
Youth can effectively contribute to civic engagement and involvement

by providing mass leadership, decision-making, community entrepreneurship, morality, commitment, volunteerism, sports, media etc. This will help in containing aggression, hostility, conflict and individual differences affecting youth in the society.

b. Skills Improvement

Developing required skills, experiences and competencies among youth is a main factor in empowering young people to turn out to be independent, to create safe transitions to adulthood stage and to slot in as appreciated social actors. It requires suitable learning environment that prepares youth with necessary competencies to go through various major life transitions. It also reduces unemployment issues, in the society. This can be very important in order to eradicate discrimination and poverty, and to endorse inclusive growth. Prime Minister Modi's idea about skilled Indians would be a very good move in this direction. To deal with unemployment or lack of social inclusion at all levels - international, national and regional and include all relevant stakeholders, requires a high level of skill training programme at the earliest.

c. Cross Cultural Understanding

The major aim of intercultural or cross cultural understanding is to build an appropriate perspective of various approaches and practices, to augment contribution and the liberty and capability to make choices, to promote parity and to improve original and novel approaches among young people in the country. It is also a good platform for rapid social inclusion of the youth from marginalized and minority sectors.

d. Management of Human differences and Peace

It is necessary to have more appropriate approaches to endorse a culture of peace, tolerance amongst young people to keep them away from anti social activities like terrorism, drugs and alcoholism, crime, religious and caste issue, son of soil theory, violence, gender discrimination, human trafficking etc. They can also play vital role in the community management for maintaining peace and harmony in the society. Besides, they can make significant contribution to the field of human rights as well.

e. Social Networking and Social Media

Today new media technology such as social media (facebook, twitter

etc) has become part and parcel of life for a lot of young people. It has provided platform for the youth to express their opinion and connect with the community. Networking is the mantra of youth in the era of information and youth have accepted and recognized the new channels of communication.

F. Youth and Inclusive Development

It is time to have some deliberate policies to reduce inequalities, discrimination and promote inclusive growth focusing youth. This includes among others, addressing disparities in gender, youth, and quality and relevant education, improving the investment climate; and encouraging the private sector for providing public and private partnerships.

This calls for finding out and analysing the issues which endorse or dishearten social inclusion of young people in a multi cultural society like India. The discriminatory attitudes towards young people, needs to be critically examined and focused on the 'problem' of adults rather than the 'problem' of young people themselves

It is generally believed that NGOs and civil society play a mediating role between government and young people as the latter's potential has been pushed to the periphery and relegated their aspirations to the background. It is generally believed that civil society can support the inclusion of unemployed youth by speeding up their various engagements in public or political movements and public consciousness and by speedy delivery of youth welfare programmes.

Finally it is learnt that high rate of youth unemployment and unrest across the country continues to be gradually increasing. The planned discourse process has given youth the opportunity to stress key issues of social inclusion, such as age, prejudice based issue, skilled occupation, and inclusive education, as essential approaches for youth to take their equitable space in society.

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