**NHRC, India’s Comments on the UN Human Rights Council Resolution 35/14 on ‘Youth and Human Rights’**

The following are NHRC, India’s Comments on the following six points, as sought by OHCHR:

* Main challenges faced by young people in your country;
* Examples of discrimination against young people in the exercise of their rights;
* Examples of policies and programmes aimed at supporting young people to realize their rights.
* Information on how youth organizations or youth-led structures are involved in developing, implementing, monitoring and/or evaluating policies and programmes on youth;
* Measures that can be taken at international level to facilitate/support the realization of young people’s rights;
* Any other issue you would like to share with OHCHR

**NHRC, India’s Comments**

**Challenges Faced By Young People In India**

The Youth, i.e. those falling within the age group of 15-29 years constitutes nearly 34.8% of the total population of India. This group which is the most vibrant and dynamic segment of the country’s population constitutes potentially its most valuable human resource. The main challenges faced by youth in India pertain to:

* Education
* Employment and Skill Development
* Entrepreneurship
* Health and Healthy Lifestyle
* Sports
* Promotion of Social Values
* Community Engagement
* Participation in Politics and Governance
* Youth Engagement
* Inclusion
* Social Justice.

**Examples of discrimination against young people in the exercise of their rights**

There are a number of youth at risk and marginalised youth who require special attention in order to ensure that they can access and benefit from the government programmes. These youth can broadly be categorised as follows:

* Socially and economically disadvantaged youth, including but not limited to youth belonging to SC/ ST/ OBC groups, migrant youth and women.
* Out-of-school or drop-outs from the formal educational mainstream.
* Youth living in conflict affected districts, especially the youth from Jammu & Kashmir and the North East.
* Youth living with disability or suffering from chronic diseases.
* Youth at risk, including but not limited to youth suffering from substance abuse, youth at risk of human trafficking and youth working in hazardous occupations, sex workers.
* Youth that suffer from social or moral stigma including but not limited to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) youth, youth infected or affected by HIV/AIDS.
* Youth in institutional care, orphanages, correctional homes and prisons.
* It may also be stated that youth in country do face discrimination by way of denial of right to choose to marry a person of their choice. They face reprisals and violence in many cases when they choose to marry a person of another caste. These offences take place on the orders of so called Khap Panchayat (community assemblies) and at times the youth in question get killed in the name of family honour (honour killing). The Supreme Court of India has come down heavily on Khap Panchayats and has declared that it was illegal for parents or khap panchayats to interfere in the decisions of adult males and females of different castes to marry. The court had asked the Central Government to submit response regarding measures taken for preventions of harassment and honour killing of any couple opting for inter-caste and intra-clan (gotra) marriages.

**Examples of policies and programmes aimed at supporting young people to realise their rights**

* There is separate Ministry at the Union level, namely Youth Affairs and Sports, which is exclusively working for the welfare of youth in the country. The Government of India has introduced a National Youth Policy – 2014 on 9th January 2014 focusing of youth development and empowerment in the age group of 15-29 years. The policy proposes broad policy intervention for the youth consistent of the 12th Plan priority and seek to suggest framework for appropriate policy intervention by the Government and nongovernmental stakeholders empowering the youth to enable them to realize their full potential as also to contribute to the progress of the nation.
* The Government of India has also embarked upon imparting various skills to the youth under “Skill India”.
* Other policies/programmes for the youth include, National Programme for Youth and Adolescent Development (NPYAD), National Young Leaders Programme (NYLP), National Skill Development Policy 2009, and National Youth Corps 2014.

**Information on  how youth organisations or youth-led structures are involved in developing, implementing, monitoring and/or evaluating policies and programmes on youth**

The Ministry of Youth and Sports Department (MoYS) endeavors to create an international perspective among youth in collaboration with other countries and international agencies/organizations on various youth issues. The Department also collaborates with the Commonwealth in organizing a number of events concerning youth in Commonwealth countries in the Asia-Pacific Region.

* **Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS): NYKS**, launched in 1972 is one of the largest youth organizations in the world. NYKS currently has 8.65million youth enrolled thorugh 3.03 lakh youth clubs across the country. The objective is to develop the personality and leadership qualities of the youth and to engage them in nation building activities.
* **National Service Scheme (NSS):** NSS was launched in 1969 with the objective of developing the personality and character of student youth through voluntary community service.

With the objective to promote volunteer-ism as a modality, for social mobilization and outreach at district and local levels, a project Strengthening of NYKS and NSS has been started from the Financial Year 2015-16. This Project is being implemented jointly by the UNDP/UNV India and Government of India. The Project will continue till Financial Year 2017-18. The Project Team comprises of One Project Manger, 3 UNV Management Associates and 29 District Youth Coordinators. The Team has started working in the identified Districts of 29 States.

**Measures that can be taken at international level to facilitate/support the realisation of young people’s rights**

It is evident that the youth will play a crucial role in the future development of all nations. Hence it is important that the issues related to youth are mainstreamed and youth become a national priority. This can be achieved in several ways, including:

* **Building Youth Development into Result Framework Document (RFD):** Youth development is not an activity that can be performed in isolation. One key mechanism for ensuring that all Departments of the government shall work towards mainstreaming youth development and participation by identifying linkages between all the government departments and incorporate these into the respective RFDs. Youth engagement and participation measures must be included as metrics of success of various government programmes in the respective RFDs.
* **Developing a ‘Youth Connect’ Programme:** Given the fact that youth represent a large proportion of the target segment of most of the population, the state and non-state actors need to collaborate and set up a mandatory ‘Youth Connect’ programme which is a targeted youth outreach programme. This programme will inform and educate the youth about the various schemes and programmes available to them under the various government departments.
* **Use Information and Communication Technology to engage with the youth:** ICT and social media are key tools that can be leveraged to connect and engage with the youth. Given the growing penetration of the internet amongst young people, especially via smartphones, the government should more actively engage with the youth using technologies that they access on a daily basis.
* **Promote youth development through existing organisations:** The government should work towards leveraging the vast number of stakeholders that are already working to support youth development and participation, and expanding its own reaction.
* **To encourage the development of education and training systems** that are better aligned with the current and future needs of young people and their societies, a wide range of learning options—including formal and non-formal education, literacy instruction, job-skills training, and lifelong education—should be made available.

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