No.J-17011/88/2019-Policy (Vol.II)

युवा कार्यक्रम एवं खेल मंत्रालय

Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports

युवा कार्यक्रम विभाग

Department of Youth Affairs

Shastri Bhawan
New Delhi, 29th April, 2022

Subject: Draft National Youth Policy.

The Government has reviewed the existing draft National Youth Policy, 2014 and prepared a new draft National Youth Policy (NYP). The draft NYP envisages a ten-year vision for youth development that India seeks to achieve by 2030. It is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and serves to 'unlock the potential of the youth to advance India'. The draft NYP seek to catalyze widespread action on youth development across five priority areas viz. education; employment & entrepreneurship; youth leadership & development; health, fitness & sports; and social justice. Each priority area is underpinned by the principle of social inclusion keeping in view the interests of the marginalized sections.

2.   The Department of Youth Affairs seek comments/views/suggestions on the draft NYP from all stakeholders.

3.   The comments/views/suggestions   a on the draft Policy may be sent within 45 days (by 13th June, 2022) by email to **dev.bhardwaj@gov.in** or **policy-myas@gov.in.**

(Devashish Bhardwaj)
Deputy Secretary to the Government of India
Tel. No. 011-23383292

युवा कार्यक्रम और खेल मंत्रालय

MINISTRY OF
YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS

National Youth Policy 2021

Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

1 Introduction

1.1 In recent time, the world has witnessed the growth of young people as a vital demographic and a powerful agent of change and progress. They have the power to shape policy, influence markets and reimagine social structures. Furthermore, they are action-oriented, with the ability to think creatively and effect positive change across society, industry, and culture. Youth are at the forefront of harnessing the power of technology in all spheres and serve as a critical component in the larger vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat, and as they pave the way towards the future against incredible odds, they are an indicator of hope.

1.2 International organisations have acknowledged the significance of youth on various prominent development fora, a population that has been prominently featured in 12 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and with sufficient support, youth will be instrumental in fulfilling the SDGs.

1.3 With nearly one out of every four persons between the ages of 15 and 29, India has an enviable youth population. Currently, they are estimated to constitute more than 34% of the total population[1]. While these numbers are expected to decline in the coming years, youth will still account for almost 24% of India's population or 365 million people in 2030. Compared to countries like China, Japan, and the USA, where they face the challenge of an ageing population (Exhibit 1), India has the advantage of being in a position of strength with the potential to drive economic growth.
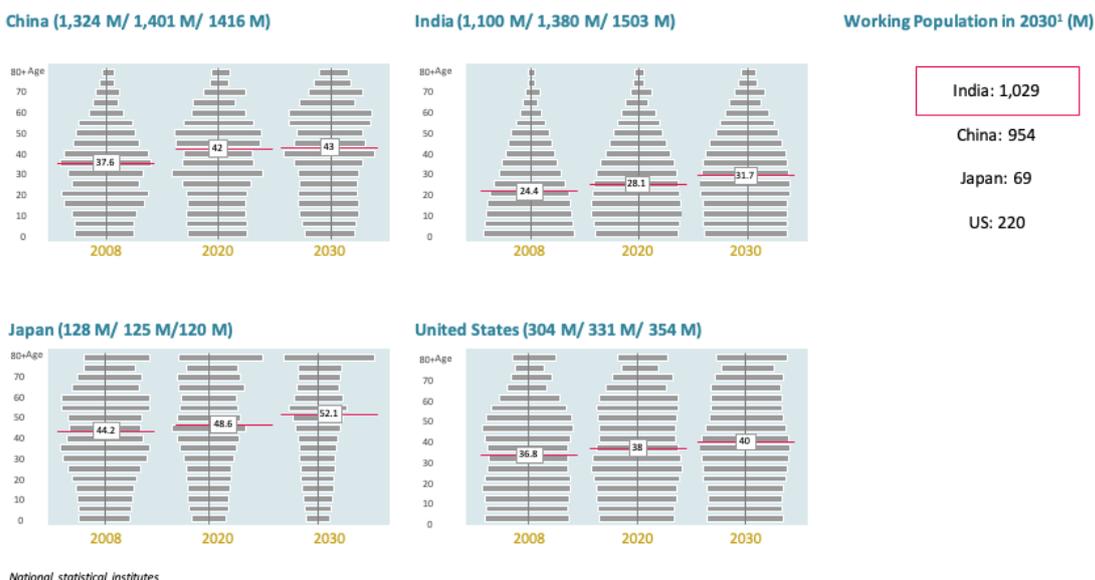

Exhibit 1: Population figures by age for China, India, Japan and the US in 2020 and 2030

1.4 Youth constitute a vital social capital for economic growth anywhere in the world. The GoI recognises that the current youth bulge is an abundant asset and offer immense leverage in terms of skilled labour, entrepreneurship, and innovation & knowledge to accelerate the developmental needs of the country.

---

[1] Youth in India, Central Statistics Office

1.5 Keeping with the vision and intent of the National Youth Policy (NYP) 2021 to 'unlock the potential of the youth to advance India', the Government of India (GoI) recognises the importance of understanding this dynamic segment and nurturing them to shape the future. In recent years, many programmes and schemes have been initiated to support youth holistically. These critical interventions include but are not limited to health, education, skill-building, entrepreneurship, and leadership training.

1.6 Over the last two decades, India has made significant strides towards better education and improving the learning quality. The National Education Policy 2020 provides a robust framework that includes learnings from the success of programmes like the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) and Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP). Initiatives like the School Education Quality Index (SEQI) and Performance Grading Index (PGI) draw much-needed focus on better learning outcomes. Similarly, the Skills Assessment Metric for Vocational Assessment (SAMVAY) strengthens the quality and reach of vocational education. These efforts have improved access to education for youth regardless of their social or economic background and enabled synergistic action towards learning quality.

1.7 Each year, millions of young people enter the workforce; they are the foundation of India's population pyramid that can mobilise economic growth. Investments have been made on multiple fronts to generate employment, develop skills and foster entrepreneurship. Schemes like Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushal Yojana (DDU-GKY) and Skills India campaign have been expanded for better reach. New programmes like the Entrepreneurship and Skill Development Programme, Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP), Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY) and Start-up India will support the entrepreneurship ecosystem, and the National Career Service matches job seekers with employers.

1.8 The GoI has initiated efforts to engage the youth through technology and has organised youth parliaments, youth conventions and festivals. Special programmes like the Youth for Development, National Youth Advisory Council, and the National Programme for Youth and Adolescent Development (NPYAD) have been launched to increase youth volunteering, motivate the youth and enable them to be strong leaders. The GoI's efforts in education and employment have yielded tremendous results for the youth. Between 2014 and 2017, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) rose for both secondary and higher education levels[2], and 270 new universities were established[3]. According to the Labour Bureau report, approximately 1.1 crore jobs were generated under the PMMY scheme between 2015 and 2017[4], and efforts towards fostering entrepreneurship have resulted in recognition of over 14,000 start-ups across 25 states[5].

1.9 Further to these advancements, the GoI wants to recognise that much more can and should be done. Access to quality education has improved, but additional efforts are needed to effectively equip the youth with the skills necessary for the 21st century. While skill-building and learning

---

[2] UDISE FLASH STATISTICS 16-17
[3] AISHE Reports
[4] Report on PMMY Survey 2018
[5] Startup India Status Report 2018

opportunities are increasingly outcome-oriented, efforts to cohesively link skilled workers with apt employment is the need of the hour. Activating livelihood opportunities for the large youth population requires understanding where the jobs will come from and how they can be prepared for them. With an increasing range of support and services, entrepreneurship is a career option that holds significant opportunities for India's youth and economy.

1.10   The health and well-being of youth are essential for their personal development and enable them to become productive members of society. Various initiatives have been launched to enhance access to quality healthcare and to provide support in critical areas. These include the National Health Policy release, schemes such as Ayushman Bharat, POSHAN Abhiyaan, Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana and the National Strategic Plan for Tuberculosis Elimination. The National Mental Health Policy, launched in 2019, provided the framework to improve the quality of mental healthcare and ensure universal access. These efforts are reflected in the key health metrics that have also registered significant improvements. Between 2014 and 2017, the Maternal Mortality Rate and the rate of tuberculosis (TB) deaths decreased, and the percentage of institutional deliveries increased[67].

1.11   In recent years, sports in India have received widespread attention, as have the efforts to build a fitness culture. Schemes such as the Fit India Movement, Khelo India and the Sports Revitalisation Action Plan have been launched, and India's first National Sports University established. The GoI has emphasised the importance of sports in education and as a viable career option for young people. These interventions have created a space for sports and fitness in the minds of the youth. The GoI's focus on sports and fitness has stimulated the growth of the sporting industry and has brought a considerable degree of private sector investment in the arena[8]. Ten sporting leagues have been established, including the Pro Kabaddi League, Hockey India League and Indian Badminton League. Initiatives to engage the youth and increase awareness have also improved participation.

1.12   From a health and fitness perspective, healthcare access and services are being expanded to address overall well-being. However, efforts need to be bolstered towards addressing critical youth concerns like mental health, substance abuse, and sexual and reproductive health. In recent years, youth participation in civic and political life has increased, creating avenues that can be leveraged to encourage volunteering and develop leadership skills. These efforts need strengthening at-scale for youth mobilisation, especially among youth from marginalised and disadvantaged communities. Additional steps are also necessary for the overall social and economic development of these communities, and to ensure their inclusion and participation across programmes.

1.13   The GoI has implemented various measures to strengthen social justice and reinforce the principle of unity in diversity. These steps have been taken to ensure equity, enhance the justice system, and increase knowledge and awareness among youth. Furthermore, legal literacy clubs have been set up in schools to raise legal awareness, and digital programmes were implemented to improve access to legal aid, such as Tele-law and Nyaya Bandhu. According to

---

[6]NITI Aayog, Maternal Mortality Ratio
[7]Global Burden of Disease Study, 2017
[8] Sports Infrastructure in India, PwC, 2019

the National Legal Services Authority, between 2018 and 2019, 1.97 crore individuals attended 1.76 lakh legal literacy clubs. Social audits have been held in various states to elicit youth response on key topics, and 6 lakh youths have participated in neighbourhood youth parliaments[9]. One Stop Centres have been set up for women, and special helplines for the Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) communities. Schemes have also been launched to develop various groups, including the North East Special Infrastructure Development Scheme and the Special Central Assistance for Left Wing Extremism (LWE) Affected Districts.

1.14   The world is changing in significant ways, and India's youth are poised to make the most of it. However, action needs to be catalysed to address the barriers to youth development and prepare the youth for a world that is changing in significant ways. The onset of COVID-19, especially, has further accelerated automation, fast-tracked e-commerce, increased remote work, and reduced business travel. the integration of technology in our everyday lives. However, the pandemic also highlighted the need for stronger protections for all youth, particularly the millions of young Indians who migrate from rural to urban areas to pursue better opportunities. The large-scale migration adversely affects the rural economy and imposes a resource burden on urban towns and cities.

1.15   All over the world, rapid urbanization, globalisation and automation are changing the nature of employment and the workforce's skills. Furthermore, climate change is progressing rapidly, affecting agriculture and jobs. Foundational skills that will help citizens thrive in the future of work, including cognitive, digital, interpersonal, and self-leadership skills, are undergoing change. New jobs are emerging, and old ones are becoming obsolete, and economies are trying to limit their contribution to climate change while adjusting to its effects. Understanding the impact of these developments on the youth and leveraging these forces in the right direction will be critical for progressive youth development.

1.16   Keeping with the global trend, India too is urbanising fast. While urbanisation is often linked closely with economic development creating more opportunities for youth, it also exposes them to various risks and vulnerabilities. The predominant challenges for youth of peri-urban areas include social insecurity, unemployment and joblessness, exposure to higher rates of crime and violence leading to detrimental behaviour. The GoI has already launched several schemes to reduce poverty and vulnerability of poor people in urban and peri-urban areas. To enable urban youth to meet their aspirations, the Central Ministries and Departments will focus on providing more options and opportunities. Efforts will need to be made to check detrimental behaviour of the unemployed urban youth while at the same time harnessing their potential for national development.

1.17   It is in this context of evolving barriers to youth development and significant national and global megatrends, that the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MoYAS) has drafted the National Youth Policy 2021.

---

[9] MoYAS Annual Report 2018-19

VISION AND OBJECTIVES OF THE NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY 2021

2

2 Vision and Objectives of the National Youth Policy

2.1 The NYP 2021 articulates a ten-year vision for youth development that India seeks to achieve by 2030. It is aligned with the SDGs and serves to 'unlock the potential of the youth to advance India'.

2.2 The NYP 2021 seeks to catalyse widespread action on youth development across five priority areas (Exhibit 2), including education; employment and entrepreneurship; youth leadership and development; health, fitness and sports; and social justice. Each priority area is underpinned by the principle of social inclusion — enabling equitable progress by including the most marginalised sections in the design, planning and implementation of all schemes and programmes.

Youth Leadership and Development
Unleash the power of youth to address India's biggest challenges, and emerge as leaders of tomorrow

Education
Enable all youths to take charge of their future through equitable access to quality education

Employment and Entrepreneurship
Empower young Indians to grow enterprises and find sustainable productive employment

Yuvashakti
Unlocking the potential of the youth to advance India

Social Justice
Create a just and equal society based on mutual respect where the youth feel safe, included and able to exercise their rights

Health and Fitness
Ensure health and well-being for youths of all identities;

Develop a culture of fitness and sports among youths, and achieve national and international eminence

Social inclusion (underpinning all objectives)

Leverage the power of diversity in the youth and ensure equitable progress for all groups

Exhibit 2: Vision and objectives of NYP 2021

2.3 The NYP 2021 draws a detailed roadmap towards the vision outlined for the youth in the coming decade and delineates the actions within each priority area.

2.4 The policy envisions an education system that imparts career opportunities and life skills to all young people. It ensures that the youth have access to sustainable livelihood opportunities that encourages them to stay within and revive the rural economy, generate employment via micro-region-specific strategies, foster entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship, and support the informal and gig economy.

2.5 To develop India's youth, both men and women, as leaders of tomorrow, the NYP 2021 prescribes strengthening the volunteering ecosystem, expanding opportunities for leadership development and mobilising technology to establish a vibrant youth enablement platform.

Further efforts for the inclusion of marginalised and disadvantaged youths in volunteering and leadership opportunities are identified.

2.6 The health and well-being of the youth, especially young women of reproductive age, will be ensured by strengthening preventative and palliative healthcare, especially for mental health, substance abuse disorders and sexual and reproductive health issues that are critical among this demographic. The policy purports a progressive and essential approach to mobilising technology and data to improve healthcare delivery and specific interventions to provide the marginalised youth with access to quality healthcare. The policy also proposes strengthening the overall fitness of youth by building a vibrant culture of sports and fitness.

2.7 The policy outlines actions that will empower the youth and ensure their safety, strengthen the legal system for the quick delivery of justice and provide holistic support for the rehabilitation of juveniles. Special efforts are prescribed to ensure social justice for marginalised and vulnerable youths.

2.8 The NYP 2021 is a roadmap for the development of youth today to ensure a bright future for India tomorrow. This national-level framework will be adopted by states that will formulate their youth policies to serve the development needs of the region. The policy prescribes the necessary actions for various ministries in line with the national priorities in the respective thematic area.

2.9 The success of the NYP 2021 will require actions from stakeholders across government entities, the social sector, civil society, and the private sector. The effective mobilisation of these stakeholders can drive the country towards achieving common policy objectives that will require strategic partnerships, strong coordination, and robust implementation. The MoYAS will coordinate these efforts and ensure that detailed action plans are developed based on policy prescriptions. It will drive the monitoring and tracking of policy outcomes and consolidate findings that will be shared publicly and transparently. As the nodal ministry for youth, the MoYAS will play the critical role of ensuring that actions triggered by the NYP 2021 are effective and efficient in delivering the ten-year vision for youth development in the country.

EDUCATION

3 Education

3.1 Education is the most critical enabler for youth to acquire knowledge as well as the capabilities necessary to make the most of all opportunities throughout life. Education also enables youth to contribute positively and participate fully in society.

3.2 Beyond academic knowledge, young people need quality education that also imparts critical career and life skills and enables the holistic development of these individuals, socialised to societal norms. The NYP 2021 envisages an education system that will ultimately 'enable all youth to take charge of their futures through equitable access to quality education'.

3.3 Over the years, GoI has initiated various transformational education policies and schemes for the nation and state. These schemes include the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) to improve access to elementary education and improve the quality of learning and the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) to provide universal access to secondary level education. In 2018, the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SmSA) was launched to coordinate the implementation efforts and promote an integrated approach for classes 1 to 10.

3.4 The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP) prescribes additional recommendations to strengthen the quality and relevance of education and provide for an equitable education system. The NEP prioritises ensuring universal access to education till class 12, reforming curriculum and pedagogy, infusing education with technology and reimagining vocational education, among others. It also makes provisions for the reintegration of dropouts and out-of-school children (15 to 18 years) and for adult literacy and lifelong learning.

3.5 Aligned with the NEP, the NYP 2021 envisages an education system that ensures holistic learning and development of all segments of youth by making education relevant for those in secondary and higher education, supporting the segment of youths not in education, employment or training (NEET), and by building an inclusive education system that leverages technology for enhanced 'teaching-learning' experiences for youths from disadvantaged and marginalised communities. This will be achieved through key areas of action outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Areas of action in Education

MAKE EDUCATION SYSTEMS RELEVANT FOR THE YOUTH	**Undertake curriculum reforms to include 21st century skills; build teacher capacity for effective delivery**
	Integrate value-based education in the curriculum for holistic youth development
	Strengthen and scale-up delivery of vocational education in classes 6 to 12
SUPPORT THE NEET YOUTH	Ensure retention of youths at-risk of dropping out
	Reintegrate dropouts and out-of-school youths
	Continue to expand access and strengthen distance-learning programs so that more youth can complete their education
	Develop specific learning programmes targeting NEET youth
BUILD AN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SYSTEM FOR MARGINALISED AND DISADVANTAGED YOUTH	Strengthen existing schemes to support youth from SC, ST and other marginalised in education
	Ensure availability of inclusive curricular resources and use of inclusive pedagogies
	Ensure the availability of trained teachers, counsellors and therapists for marginalised and disadvantaged youth
	Ensure fair representation of all communities among teachers and staff to promote inclusion

MAKE EDUCATION SYSTEMS RELEVANT FOR THE YOUTH

Undertake curriculum reforms to include 21st-century skills; build teacher capacity for effective delivery

3.6 It is recognised that future jobs in the 21st century will require new skill sets and the youth of the country will have to reskill and upskill regularly. The relevant Central Ministries/Departments and Agencies will review and upgrade education and skilling curriculum and methodologies for teaching and learning periodically to prepare youth for future jobs. Efforts will be made to keep education and skilling of youth relevant to the global and national demands in the everchanging world.

3.7 The development of 21st-century skills is essential for young people to navigate the world. These skills include inter-personal communication, collaboration, critical thinking, design thinking, problem-solving, dealing with change and more.

3.8 It also covers ICT, science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), and advanced technical skills, including deep digital literacy, data and analytics and financial literacy, that have become mainstays of the current time. These skills will be integrated as a core part of the curriculum for secondary and higher education. The relevant ministries will be encouraged to review the scope and depth of the topics currently covered in secondary school to make room for these essential skills.

3.9 Teacher capacity will be developed through teacher training and specialised pedagogical interventions across secondary and higher education to deliver these skills effectively. In addition, the necessary steps will be taken to ensure the adequate availability of teachers.

Integrate value-based education in the curriculum for holistic youth development

3.10 Holistic development of youth necessitates fostering a sense of civic responsibility and inculcating a sense of service. Towards this end, the GoI will integrate a value-based education in the curriculum for schools and colleges, appreciating art and culture, defending human rights, and instilling a belief in social justice. Students will also be engaged in understanding and resolving prejudice and bias; the teachers will be trained to deliver the curriculum effectively and to assess achievements and progress.

3.11 Community service will be integrated into the curriculum. Practical community service can cultivate a sense of civic responsibility and ensure that young people can better engage with society. Therefore, all students pursuing their higher education will be expected to intern or volunteer with NGOs or government volunteering organisations like the Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS), National Service Scheme (NSS) etc.

Strengthen and scale-up delivery of vocational education in classes 6 to 12

3.12 Efforts will be undertaken to change the perception of vocational education and the idea that it is lesser than academic education. The centrally sponsored scheme of Vocationalisation of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education (VSHSE) provides for diversification of educational opportunities to enhance individual employability, reduce the mismatch between demand and supply of skilled manpower and provides an alternative for those pursuing higher education. The large-scale integration of vocational education with secondary education will reinforce this bridge between education and employment. Furthermore, trade choices, the necessary technical skills and soft skills training will be aligned with industry needs.

3.13 Media campaigns and counsellors will be mobilised to share information about career choices and the options thereafter. Efforts will also be made to raise awareness on the value and utility of vocational education among key influencers, parents, and students.

3.14 In line with the NEP, the vocational education model will be structured to provide practical exposure to multiple vocations in early classes (6 to 9), followed by trade specialisation from class 10 and apprenticeship programmes in higher classes (11 and 12). Partnerships with Sector Skill Councils (SSCs) and Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) will be encouraged; the quality of vocational training providers will be systematically monitored. They will be held accountable for the employment outcomes of students.

SUPPORT THE NEET YOUTH

3.15 Many young people in India are not in education, employment, or training (NEET). This includes those who do not have access to education, and those that drop out of the system.

3.16 Special efforts will be made to rehabilitate NEET youth as well as enable their learning and development. This would include measures to improve access to education and encourage students to remain in the system. Where applicable, the youth should also be able to re-enter the system with targeted support.

Ensure retention of youths at risk of dropping out

3.17 Building upon the NEP recommendations, efforts will be made to utilise data on students' learning levels, attendance etc., to identify students at risk of dropping out. These students will be given counselling, and school-community-parent partnerships will be mobilised to encourage them to stay in school. These efforts will be made across secondary and higher levels of education, including vocational training institutes.

3.18 The scope of scholarships and benefits will be enhanced based on need and merit to cover vulnerable groups susceptible to dropping out. The GoI will also promote merit-based bank loans to exceptional students, with minimal or no collateral. Finally, a dashboard will be developed to serve as a one-stop-shop for youth to access any information about education-related support services.

Reintegrate dropouts and out-of-school youth

3.19 The segment of NEET youth comprises out-of-school children and dropouts, and concerted efforts will be necessary to track and identify them systematically. Comprehensive data systems will be built to serve this purpose and drive reintegration efforts to welcome these children and youth back into the education system.

3.20 The central and state governments will implement at-scale programmes that will counsel students who have dropped out to return to school, support them in getting admission, help them catch up on missed months or years, and where applicable, prepare them for the workforce. The GoI will encourage partnerships with NGOs and private sector organisations that successfully operate non-formal education centres to support reintegration efforts and to invest in the development of the youth.

Continue to expand access to quality secondary and higher education, and strengthen distance learning programmes

3.21 The number of secondary and higher education institutes will be increased to improve access to education. In areas with high unmet demand, new schools will be established or upgraded. In areas with low demand, access will be ensured by providing supplementary transport and information and communication technology (ICT) – enabled learning facilities where possible.

3.22 Improved funding and capacity building support will be provided to state universities, and central universities that receive a larger share of the University Grants Commission (UGC) funding and support today. This will equip them to handle the load of enrolments, address issues such as teacher shortages, and improve access to quality education for students from underserved areas.

3.23 Several colleges in India have very low enrolment, and several universities and colleges lack appropriate accreditations. The policy prioritises stronger regulation of private institutes to ensure that the education imparted is of value to the youth. Additionally, efforts will be made to increase the number of multi-disciplinary institutes in the country. School and college infrastructure will also be improved with additions like science laboratories, libraries, computer centres, etc.

3.24 COVID-19 has forced government and institutes to rethink the traditional modes of teaching and accelerated technology integration as a channel to deliver lessons. This momentum will be maintained to upgrade teaching and learning and to strengthen distance and open learning. Technology will be leveraged to enhance access to education for those who are physically unable to attend school or college due to distance or disability. These technology-related transformations will be accompanied by suitable measures to ensure that distance and open education delivers quality learning.

Develop specific learning programmes targeting NEET youth

3.25 Creating opportunities for learning for the existing NEET population of youth will be a priority for the Central and State Governments. Investing in their holistic development is essential to grow to their full potential and contribute to society, the workforce, and nation-building.

3.26 Specific national-level programmes will be implemented targeting the youth in the NEET category, with the support of communities, civil society organisations (CSOs), NSS, NYKSs etc. These programmes will cover a wide range of essential skills that may include:

- Basic literacy and numeracy skills to close gaps in learning
- Essential life skills, mostly financial and digital literacy, childcare and family welfare education
- Constitutional and legal awareness for improved participatory citizenship
- Essential value-based education, especially awareness of human rights and gender sensitisation
- Arts and culture awareness, with a focus on tolerance, multiculturalism and pluralism driving the *"Ek Bharat-Shresth Bharat"* initiative.
- Environmental education, with a focus on applied methods to prevent environmental degradation, knowledge of pollution and climate change
- Vocational education and skills training, in alignment with local employment needs

BUILD AN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SYSTEM FOR MARGINALISED AND DISADVANTAGED YOUTHS

3.27 Youth populations that encounter marginalisation, such as women, SCs, STs, and rural and lower-income groups, face additional barriers in accessing quality education. Special efforts will be made to overcome these challenges to achieve the vision of *"Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas"*.

Strengthen schemes to support marginalised youths in education

3.28 The schemes to support the inclusion of marginalised youths in education include the Inclusive Education of the Disabled at the Secondary Stage (IEDSS), the programme for establishing ashram schools for tribal students, the National Overseas Scholarship Scheme for SC and ST students, among others. The management and execution of the schemes will be strengthened with better funding, ensuring that these interventions are uniformly implemented, monitored, and widely publicised.

3.29 Overall, efforts will be directed towards the early integration of students from SC, ST and other marginalised sections and their continued education. The education of girls is a priority that has huge dividends in health indicators, not only should girls and young women be encouraged to pursue higher education, but efforts need to be made to increase their representation in STEM.

3.30 New schemes will also be introduced to educate the disadvantaged youth who are not covered adequately by the current programmes. Special scholarships, sanitation facilities, hostel accommodation etc., and other necessary infrastructure and incentives will be considered. Investments in ICT should be used to aid the process of teaching and learning, especially among the SC, ST and other disadvantaged groups to provide them equal footing in the context of the 21st-century.

3.31 All existing and new schemes will ensure that seats and funding allocated for SC, ST and other marginalised and disadvantaged groups are utilised to benefit youth from these target groups.

Ensure availability of inclusive curricular resources and use of inclusive pedagogies

3.32 It is recognised that tribal youth in India are not at par with mainstream population in terms of educational attainment and employment opportunities. The literacy rate and GER among the tribal youth is lower while the drop-out rate is higher than the national average. The Gross Attendance Rate above higher secondary level among tribal youth is only 7%, which is much lower than the national average of 13. The unemployment among tribal youth is also much higher. The GoI will make special efforts to improve literacy rate and GER at secondary, senior secondary and higher education levels and reduce drop-out of tribal youth.

3.33 Special efforts will be undertaken to ensure the relevance of content and curriculum for disadvantaged and marginalised youths. For example, this will include creating education materials in tribal languages and customising content to disability-friendly formats. Such resources will be made available across secondary and higher levels of education.

3.34 Among youths from tribal and marginalised communities, efforts will also be made to encourage teaching in the mother tongue for the early grades and, over time, build proficiency in mainstream languages like English, Hindi, or any other primary regional language. Schools and colleges will be supported to institute special language classes and remedial classes as per the needs of students.

Ensure the availability of trained teachers, counsellors, and therapists for disadvantaged youths

3.35 To support learning for students from marginalised communities, GoI will ensure the availability of trained teachers and staff to deliver the curriculum and content in tribal languages. Teachers will also receive training in teaching and managing integrated classes to create equal education opportunities for the disabled. Furthermore, special efforts will be

made to address the need for special educators and generate community awareness about learning disabilities in rural areas.

3.36   Partnerships with NGOs that are doing exceptional work in educating disabled children and youths will be encouraged. The GoI will ensure that students have access to counsellors and therapists specific to their disabilities. Schools and colleges will either employ in-house counsellors or hire the services of an approved third-party counsellor.

Ensure fair representation among teachers and staff to promote greater inclusion

3.37   The representation of marginalised communities among teachers and education staff will be enhanced to impact the learning of youth from similar communities positively. The GoI will promote fair representation among teachers and school staff by prioritising equal opportunity employment, including women, SC and ST populations, people with disabilities, and other marginalised sections.

EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

4 Employment and Entrepreneurship

4.1 Despite the sheer numbers of the youth coupled with their dynamism and energy, there is a growing problem of unemployment and underemployment the world over. According to ILO Report 2017, youth unemployment rates are estimated to be three times that of the adult and close to half of the world's unemployed are youth. India is no exception to this global trend which has accelerated due to Covid-19 pandemic. The GoI will endeavour to direct the energies of the youth into productive activities by creating opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship.

4.2 Employment is the means for young people to earn a living, realise their aspirations and be engaged as active citizens. Employed young women and men pave the path to a strong economy and are central to a nation's prosperity. The returns on employment are deeply interlinked with the indices of development, such as health, nutrition, and education. The National Youth Policy 2021 envisions a future for the Indian youth to 'empower young Indians to grow enterprises and find sustainable, productive employment'.

4.3 Economies worldwide are undergoing key structural shifts as technology and globalisation are changing the employment landscape in India. The nature of jobs and the skills required have evolved and affect youth employment and their readiness in terms of skills and training. The onset of COVID-19 has added another set of challenges to consider. The youth now need to balance learning opportunities with more immediate financial needs and find jobs that match their skill levels in a shrunken labour market. To ensure youth welfare and the sustained economic prosperity of the nation, it is imperative to strengthen youth employment on priority.

4.4 Several efforts have been initiated to improve overall employment. The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) was set up and flagship programmes like the PMKVY and the Skills India campaign were launched. The PMEGP, PMMY, and Start-up India were initiated to promote entrepreneurship. Schemes like the National Career Scheme (NCS) and the National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF) were launched to strengthen the link between vocational education and employment. However, additional efforts need to be made to systematically reduce youth unemployment. Skilled youth will have a major role to play in making India a 5 trillion dollar economy by 2024. Gauging youth potential, assessing their knowledge and skills gaps, and investing to equip them with the necessary expertise and skills to be globally competitive will also need collaborative investment of public and private sector partners, especially in education and industry sectors. The NYP 2021 envisions a future where all young people in India have varied and sustainable employment opportunities. This requires:

- Efforts to generate lucrative income opportunities for youth in rural areas by revitalising the agriculture and allied economy, thereby limiting the need and desire to migrate, in line with the government's target for 'Doubling of Farmer's Incomes by 2022'.
- Developing micro-region-based employment strategies for urban and peri-urban areas, in line with the needs of specific district economies and small and medium enterprise (SME) industry clusters
- Strengthening support for youth entrepreneurship to foster entrepreneurial activity that can create jobs

- Supporting the large informal and gig economy that employs a large number of youths

4.5 These efforts need to be supplemented with four cross-cutting enabling initiatives:

- Reforming skilling to align with market needs, both in rural and urban areas
- Rationalising and strengthening existing government schemes related to employment, entrepreneurship, and skilling
- Undertaking specific measures to support the large urban migrant population
- Ensuring the inclusion of marginalised youths in employment opportunities

4.6 The key action areas as envisaged in NYP 2021 are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Areas of action in employment and entrepreneurship

REVITALISE THE RURAL ECONOMY AND RETAIN YOUTH	Make agriculture and allied sectors, and the agri-food value chains a viable and sustainable income opportunity for rural youth
	Support additional income opportunities through efforts in agriculture and allied areas
DEVELOP MICRO-REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT STRATEGIES FOR URBAN/ PERI-URBAN AREAS	Ensure development of district-level employment strategies and ownership of outcomes
	Strengthen programmes to support SME cluster development
STRENGTHEN YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP	Strengthen entrepreneurship education, and support to launch and scale businesses
	Provide specific support for social enterprises and enable social entrepreneurship
	Invest in youth outreach and national mentorship networks to develop an entrepreneurial culture
SUPPORT THE INFORMAL AND GIG ECONOMY AND ENABLE SECTOR GROWTH	Provide informal sector and gig workers with effective social security provisions
	Strengthen Unnati platform to enable demand-supply matching for 'gig' work
CROSS-CUTTING REFORMS TO DRIVE OVERALL EMPLOYMENT	Implement structural reforms in the skilling ecosystem and ensure alignment with job trends
	Review and rationalise all government schemes and raise youth awareness to ensure effective usage
	Provide systemic support to the young urban migrant population
	Devote special efforts towards the inclusion of marginalised youth segments in employment opportunities

REVITALISE THE RURAL ECONOMY

4.7 The rural economy, particularly agriculture and allied sectors, needs to be revitalised to generate income opportunities attractive for the rural youth population. Many young people migrate from villages to towns and cities in pursuit of better income opportunities, often at the cost of poor living and working conditions. Strengthening the agricultural economy will close this divide and enable rural youth to find viable opportunities in their villages.

4.8 The GoI has recently passed three Bills to benefit farmers — the Farmers Produce Trade and Commerce Bill, Farmers Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, and Essential Commodities Bill. These reforms can benefit the rural youth by creating linkages with markets, supporting smallholding farmers and enabling investments in agriculture.

Make agriculture a viable and sustainable income opportunity for rural youth

4.9 The majority of farmers in India are smallholding farmers with low incomes, poor access to resources, and are vulnerable to rural poverty. The gendered perception of farmers often overlooks the contribution of women farmers to the agriculture and allied sectors. The lack of representation or assets to their name and the challenges in accessing credit further add to the barriers they face and compounds their discrimination. Efforts will be made to increase the income of young farmers, men and women, and protect their livelihood to make farming a sustainable career choice. Increasing the income of smallholding farmers will also ensure the viability of farming for the future generations of young farmers.

4.10 Smallholding farmers will be provided improved access to credit, insurance and existing government schemes. Furthermore, a shift from mixed-crops to cash-crops will be incentivised to raise incomes. Investments in relevant infrastructure for irrigation, transportation, storage, and the provision of seeds, technologies etc., will be undertaken. Across the country, smallholding farmers also face unique challenges specific to the regional and agricultural context. The GoI will consider developing an online agriculture platform that will provide farmers with customised, real-time support to overcome these challenges, such as soil and weather-related information, local market linkages and more.

4.11 Over 50% of India's agricultural land is unirrigated and dependent on rainfall, making current and future young farmers vulnerable to the effects of global warming. The GoI will continue its efforts to combat the effects of climate change, providing necessary access to knowledge, infrastructure and technology. Additionally, farmers will be incentivised to shift to drought and flood-resistant crops and trained on better water management and sustainable agriculture practices.

Support additional income opportunities through efforts in agri and agri-adjacent areas

4.12 The broader food processing value chain can be a source of additional jobs and income for the youth. This includes processing for the agriculture and allied sectors like animal husbandry and poultry farming. The GoI will foster the growth of these sectors. Supporting measures may include providing policy and institutional support, investing in infrastructure, upgrading stakeholder capacities, raising awareness on good farming practices, ensuring access to credit,

and facilitating the emergence of new agriculture-related enterprises. The development of this ecosystem will create income opportunities for the youth and position them to become job creators.

4.13   Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) are a practical approach towards empowering several small farm holders and improving the marginalised farmer's access to resources. The FPOs can drive collective action among farmers. They can enhance market access, improve post-harvesting crop management, and enable aggregation and logistics support to increase farmer incomes, thus supporting and encouraging the adoption of the agricultural cooperative model.

DEVELOP MICRO-REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT STRATEGIES FOR URBAN/PERI-URBAN AREAS

Ensure district-level ownership of employment agenda with clear goals and accountability

4.14   District economies are often driven by specific sectors functioning within urban and peri-urban zones, such as a tourism services hub or a fisheries hub. Therefore, driving job creation at the local district-level is key to improving employment opportunities for the youth.

4.15   The GoI will drive a District Level Employment Agenda with local-level accountability and governance. This agenda will be developed based on district-level markets and available skill sets. District officers will be entrusted with cross-cutting planning and coordination across departments, developing anchor industries in the district, aligning skilling efforts, and the systematic monitoring of ongoing schemes and programmes.

Strengthen programmes to support SME cluster development

4.16   SMEs in India hold enormous potential to generate employment opportunities for the young men and women in the country. The GoI has undertaken various initiatives to develop SMEs at the cluster-level by enabling access to markets, skills and capital, which will be strengthened.

4.17   Furthermore, a comprehensive SME cluster action plan will be developed. The GoI will invest in necessary infrastructure, simplify regulatory processes, establish single-window clearance systems, and ensure accessible credit schemes. Additionally, value chain linkages will be strengthened centrally through initiatives such as Bharat Craft e-marketplace for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). At the state- and district-level, specific cluster development roadmaps will be developed, outlining the strategies for procurement, marketing etc. and identifying the additional support that will be needed from the centre and the state. Different ministries, as well as states, have launched several schemes for cluster development. This includes the Ministry of Rural Development's (MRD) investment in 100 high potential districts as part of the Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Rurban Mission (SPMRM) and the Uttar Pradesh Government's One District One Product (ODOP) scheme. These programmes will be strengthened based on assessment and analysed for gaps; efforts will be streamlined and unified under a national SME cluster action plan. There shall be a renewed focus on creating

opportunities for youth in terms of education, skilling, jobs, entrepreneurship, sports & leisure etc. to enable youth to meet their aspirations of rural living with urban lifestyle.

STRENGTHEN YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP

4.18 Reducing the barriers to launch and grow enterprises is critical to unlocking wilful entrepreneurship and corresponding income generation for the youth. Furthermore, the gap between the demand and supply of jobs can be significantly reduced by establishing nano- and micro-enterprises by first-generation entrepreneurs.

4.19 The GoI has made investments to promote entrepreneurship and increased access to credit through schemes such as the PMEGP, PMMY, and Start-up India, among several others. These programmes will be strengthened to stimulate entrepreneurial activity at scale, with simultaneous efforts to remove the obstacles in the entrepreneurial lifecycle.

Strengthen entrepreneurship education, and support to launch and scale businesses

4.20 Entrepreneurship will be encouraged among young people by integrating entrepreneurship education into the school curriculum to drive awareness and spark interest. The Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship can be leveraged to support the development of the curriculum. To encourage entrepreneurship among rural youths, the GoI will also establish dedicated centres for rural enterprises in select business schools.

4.21 Self-employment tool-kits will be developed in multiple languages to provide guidance through the entrepreneurial journey. The kits will include clear instructions on administrative steps, how to access schemes, channels to overcome common barriers, and the necessary information to access mentor networks.

4.22 Entrepreneurs also require support with scaling up the business and addressing talent and financing issues in that stage. Incubator centres will be set up within universities and colleges to address these challenges. The integration of ICT solutions in entrepreneurial endeavours will be necessary to ensure that these efforts are leveraged to their full potential.

Provide specific support for social enterprises and enable social entrepreneurship

4.23 India has a long history of social entrepreneurship, where large businesses like *Amul* and *Lijjat* have met the dual goal of being financially viable and achieving social impact. India's youth need to be inspired to view social entrepreneurship as a career choice and a means to achieve their aspirations. The GoI will set up necessary governance frameworks and facilitate the development of an ecosystem that supports social ventures, combined with efforts to stimulate youth interest.

4.24 The GoI will define and recognise social enterprise as a separate entity under legal and regulatory frameworks. Social enterprises will require lower compliance requirements and special allowances, and access to tax benefits (under section 80G of the Income Tax Act). Social youth entrepreneurship will be encouraged through additional schemes, such as access to

dedicated funding and expert mentorship networks. The GoI will also evaluate the set-up of a dedicated social enterprise centre. This platform will support youth-led social enterprises through learning, mentorship and funding opportunities in their endeavour to go from the set-up stage to growth and expansion.

4.25   The GoI has mooted the idea of setting up Social Stock Exchange which will work as a platform for listing social enterprise to ensure that capital flow to the social sector is unhindered and capital is utilised effectively to generate a lasting impact for the community. The Security and Exchange Board of India will regulate the functioning of the Social Stock Exchange. The GoI will provide incentives and support to youth to list their social enterprises in the Social Stock Exchange.

Invest in youth outreach and national mentorship networks to develop an entrepreneurial culture

4.26   Inspiring and motivating the youth to be entrepreneurs will be central to the success of the sector. The GoI will use appropriate channels, including social media, to publicise entrepreneurs' stories and their entrepreneurial journey to encourage and inspire young men and women.

4.27   A National Mentorship Programme will be established to foster ecosystems that provide young entrepreneurs with structured support and guidance. These mentorship networks will be available at the district-level, and where possible, at the block-level. A mentor pool will be developed through partnerships with local colleges, institutes, alumni networks, and local entrepreneur associations. Mentors will help youth entrepreneurs develop business models, chart the course from idea generation to execution, and provide expert enterprise management advice. The mentorship network may be offline or mapped to online platforms to enable matches between the entrepreneur and mentor based on the need and expertise. Volunteer networks such as the NSS and NYKS will be leveraged to mobilise this effort on-ground. Within the mentorship programme, provisions will be made to support and recognise budding social entrepreneurs.

4.28   Entrepreneurship competitions can increase awareness and stimulate an entrepreneurial culture among the youth. National, state, district and block-level entrepreneurship competitions will be conducted, with rewards of cash/in-kind prizes, access to finance or incubation opportunities.

4.29   The PM's National Social Entrepreneurship Challenge, a competition, will be launched to trigger youth interest in social entrepreneurship. The challenge will be a large-scale, inter-city, national-level competition to promote and inspire innovative solutions to real-life challenges. Young people from across the country will compete to win grant money to convert ideas into practice and launch their enterprise. A detailed process with clear roles and responsibilities will be defined to undertake the entrepreneur selection process and support winning entrepreneurs.

SUPPORT THE INFORMAL AND GIG ECONOMY AND ENABLE GIG SECTOR GROWTH

4.30   The informal sector accounts for over 80% of jobs in India[10]. Additionally, a large gig economy segment is emerging, where employees undertake independent, flexible, or part-time jobs. The sector employs many youths and has significant potential for future income generation.

4.31   The youth engaged across the informal and gig economy need to be provided adequate protections and income security for their sustenance within the sector. Moreover, efforts need to be made to enable the effective discovery and matching of demand to supply to drive the growth of the gig economy.

Provide informal sector and gig workers with effective social security provisions

4.32   Youth engaged in the informal and gig economy need to be provided protections according to national labour standards. Regulations and policies will be developed to ensure that these workers have access to the necessary safety-nets, health and leave benefits and are protected against discrimination and exploitation.

4.33   The income generation capacity of informal and gig economy workers will be improved by connecting them to avenues of skilling and education. Additionally, employment opportunities in the formal sector will be enabled through engagement with gig platforms. The formalisation of the informal sector will be incentivised by reducing the complexities and costs of formalising a business. These efforts will be supported by a public narrative around the benefits of formalisation.

Strengthen Unnati to enable demand-supply matching for gig work

4.34   A large number of young people seek short-term gig work; this includes students seeking part-time work, self-employed carpenters, electricians etc. Simultaneously, there is a demand for gig employees, like part-time labour or sales force in MSMEs, household demand for repairs, and corporate demand for security, housekeeping and other similar jobs. Currently, only a few private companies are serving the gig economy. Encouraging more private organisations to be involved in the effort to match the demand for gig-work to its supply can unlock unemployment opportunities and the huge untapped potential of India's youth.

4.35   The GoI's Unnati job portal connects blue-collar and grey-collar workers to job providers. This platform will be strengthened with additional features and functionalities to improve access the jobs. Additional features can include worker skills inventory, verified work history from employers, feedback and reviews from employees and employers. Over time, other functionalities can be built, such as demand-based training, information on skills financing, access to financial institutions and career counselling services.

---

[10] Measuring Informal Economy in India

CROSS-CUTTING REFORMS TO DRIVE OVERALL EMPLOYMENT

4.36 A set of cross-cutting initiatives are required to drive up employment opportunities overall. These reforms are outlined below.

Implement structural reforms in the skilling ecosystem and ensure alignment with job trends

4.37 A major thrust of the GoI's efforts to improve the employment scenario has been on skilling. The MSDE was set up, and flagship schemes such as the PMKVY and the Skills India campaign launched to bring skill development to the forefront for all stakeholders. Several other ministries have launched skilling programs, some in partnership with the private sector. There's a need to drive awareness of these schemes and ensure that the benefits are availed by the youth.

4.38 There is a need to reform skilling so that the gap between industry skill needs and supply-side efforts are bridged, and the youth enrolled in skilling courses transition into employment successfully. Efforts will be made to ensure that the skilling opportunities offered in a region are aligned with the local employment needs of the area. Industry inputs will be sought out for a skills training curriculum that will integrate critical life skills – communication skills, customer management, time management skills – into the module to enable sustained employment.

4.39 The GoI will also develop new skilling delivery models where industry organisations themselves undertake the delivery of skills. Partners can be appropriately reimbursed (Reimbursed Cost Model) or provided with financial incentives to promote internship- and apprenticeship-based models.

4.40 The Atmanirbhar Skilled Employee Employer Mapping (ASEEM) is a digital platform that acts as a directory of skilled workforce, connecting candidates, employers and training providers. The platform has been launched to match job seekers with potential employers and skill seekers with skilling institutes and training partners. The GoI will develop the ASEEM portal to build necessary flexibilities and linkages across education, employment and skilling ecosystems.

4.41 The portal will be strengthened to provide insights according to the needs of the various stakeholders. For instance, it will support a candidate's journey from assessing the demand for jobs in their state by sector, match their skill set with potential employers, and, if applicable, identify a training provider to bridge the skills gap. The portal will enable the online verification of job seekers' skills and work history and provide services like career counselling and education financing.

4.42 Additionally, two skilling areas will be prioritised – those in emerging employment avenues and global demand areas. Emerging employment avenues will include green jobs considering climate change concerns, such as those in the National Blue Mission (in aquaculture, marine biotechnology etc.), green construction, green mobility and electric vehicle manufacturing, renewable energy and sustainable financing. Skilling and re-skilling in emerging and advanced technologies such as robotics, machine learning and artificial intelligence, block-chain, and other global demand areas such as medical tourism will also be in focus and need to be prioritised.

4.43 Skill training will include language proficiency and cultural education to prepare young people for global jobs. The central and state governments can also play a key role in supporting young women and men who aspire to study or work abroad by creating linkages with overseas education providers and employers. This support will be in the form of assistance with applications, facilitation of study and work visas, language learning support and access to education loans.

Review and rationalise all government initiatives and raise youth awareness on schemes

4.44 Over the last few years, the GoI has launched multiple schemes spanning skilling, employment and entrepreneurship. All schemes and programmes will be evaluated for reach and usage and assessed for execution issues. Schemes will be terminated, combined, or refined and retained to ensure that resources are spent efficiently to improve youth employment opportunities.

4.45 Processes for systematic and periodic monitoring of schemes and their outcomes will be set up to guide continuous changes and improvements. District officers driving district employment agendas can leverage local government bodies, such as gram panchayats, to improve scheme implementation in the districts.

4.46 Information about all major government schemes will be made available on one platform for easy access. Targeted outreach programmes will also be undertaken to improve awareness of these schemes. Existing youth engagement platforms such as youth clubs, NYKS, NSS and others will be leveraged to run at-scale initiatives. In addition to this, the ASEEM portal will be updated to list all government initiatives relevant to youth employment. The portal will include regularly updated information about all schemes, how to access them, along the point of contact.

Provide systemic support to the young urban migrant population

4.47 In recent years, the rate of inter-state migration in India has been on a steady increase. Young migrants live multi-district lives and often lack access to essential public services. The GoI will build support systems for this sizable population of urban migrants. Major migration corridors have been mapped, and the GoI will facilitate multi-state agreements to ensure that migrant youths can access government resources. Migrant Support Centres will be established to aid the smooth transition of migrants into employment. These centres will support employment opportunities, legal and regulatory issues, identity validation support and accessing utility services, among others.

4.48 A large proportion of migrants work in the labour-intensive informal construction sector. These sectors have low incomes and limited work hazard protections. The GoI will encourage state governments to put in place processes to systematically monitor construction workplaces, with clear accountabilities at the municipality-level. Mechanisms will be established to provide workers with access to social security and insurance, especially for workplace injuries and deaths.

Direct special efforts towards rural youth and the inclusion of marginalised segments of youth

4.49   The GoI will make concerted efforts to create new as well as expand existing opportunities in organized sector for skilled jobs for rural youth. These may be in the areas of health, alternative medicines, physiotherapy, yoga, tourism & hospitality, green jobs like barefoot technicians in solar power, water systems etc. The concerned Central Ministries, Department and Agencies will update the offerings for skilling, re-skilling accordingly to make them job ready.

4.50   The GoI will continue to invest in quality education, skilling, and employment & livelihood opportunities for tribal youth along with their overall development. Towards, this end specific interventions will be made for skill training and education by setting up dedicated skill centres, school and college extension centres etc.

4.51   Efforts under Van Dhan Yojana, which was initiated for the economic upliftment of the forest dwellers will be leveraged for tribal youth. Economic empowerment of tribal youth will be focussed while implementing the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006.

4.52   Efforts have been made to include disadvantaged populations in employment and entrepreneurship schemes. These schemes will be improved to increase the scale of execution as well as participation from target segments. Mechanisms will be developed to monitor the success of all inclusion efforts and schemes targeting youth that are marginalised women, disabled, SC, ST, LGBTQIA+, ultra-poor or any other marginalised community. Additional measures will be devised to report progress and empower the youth to review outcomes.

4.53   Targeted efforts will be made to promote inclusive work environments and reduce the challenges that marginalised youths continue to face. These will include regulations for fair recruitment practices on portals such as the NCS, the inclusion of the third gender and other identity options on all employment forms, mentorship and apprenticeship schemes to foster connections between marginalised youth and experienced workers, and peer-support systems among workers from similar communities. Broader campaigns will also be launched for the inclusion and acceptance of marginalised youth in the workplace.

4.54   Concerted efforts will be made to improve access to redressal mechanisms for youth, especially women and members from the SC and ST communities, facing discrimination in the workplace. Focussed drives to raise awareness about the different types of discriminatory practices will be undertaken, adequate redressal channels established, and awareness created about the various modes to access the redressal channels.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT

5 Youth Leadership and Development

5.1 The youth of India are the custodians of the future, and the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat can be realised only by encouraging youth leadership. When empowered with the necessary training, youth can engage in civic and political life and solve many societal challenges. Under the theme of youth leadership and development, a section that will be under the direct purview of the MoYAS, the NYP's primary aim is to 'unleash the power of youth to address India's biggest development challenges and emerge as leaders of tomorrow'.

5.2 Volunteering is a crucial pathway to developing leadership in youth and building in the essential 21st-century skills. It is a noble endeavour that contributes to their personal development and instils a sense of service. Volunteering allows young people to affect a positive change in society and can even dismantle stereotypes and prejudices.

5.3 Social capital for youth, refers to the attributes and qualities of the family, social and community networks that facilitate cooperation between individuals and communities. In a rapidly changing, increasingly globalised society, building social capital supplies the youth with critical means for resolving potential conflict, accessing equal opportunities, and ensuring positive holistic growth. There is need to strengthen the quality and capacity of such networks, so it can create positive impact on the educational, social, economic development of youth, which in turn has an impact on young people's aspirations in education, training and the labour market. The need to improve young people's social networking, life chances and participation in civil society i.e. the development of their social capital – is therefore a focus area in the current trend of the youth policy being framed around the concept of individual choice, and for a deeper integration of youth in normative socio-economic structures.

5.4 The GoI has implemented various leadership and volunteering schemes for the development of youth in India. These include the National Cadet Corps by the Ministry of Defence, Bharat Nirman by the Ministry of Rural Development, and Vidyanjali under the Ministry of Education. There is a need to strengthen these efforts to ensure that all young people can volunteer and are supported to become leaders of the future.

5.5 Key imperatives for action are envisaged under this policy – strengthening the youth volunteering ecosystem, expanding youth leadership development opportunities, and mobilising technology as a cross-cutting youth enablement platform. Special efforts will have to be made to include marginalised and disadvantaged youths in all leadership development and volunteering efforts.

Table 3: Areas of action in youth leadership and development

STRENGTHEN THE YOUTH VOLUNTEERING ECOSYSTEM	Streamline volunteering opportunities and enhance the youth volunteering journey
	Encourage young people to volunteer and ensure due rewards and recognition

	Equip youth volunteers with necessary resources and skills, and develop their social capital to ensure a more holistic, sustained development
INVEST IN YOUTH LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT	Expand youth leadership development opportunities through higher education and leadership programmes
	Provide opportunities for the youth to engage with governance and politics
	Raise leadership aspirations through role models and wider exposure
MOBILISE A ONE-STOP YOUTH PLATFORM	Mobilise a one-stop youth volunteering and development platform to achieve youth leadership goals
DEVELOP LEADERSHIP IN MARGINALISED YOUTHS	Ensure inclusion of disadvantaged and marginalised youths and develop leadership capacities in them

STRENGTHEN THE YOUTH VOLUNTEERING ECOSYSTEM

Streamline all volunteering opportunities and enhance the youth volunteering journey

5.6 Several volunteering schemes are run by the different ministries of the central government. These include, for example, the National Service Scheme (NSS) and Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) under Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MoYAS), the National Cadet Corps (NCC) under Ministry of Defense, Indian Red Cross Volunteers and Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) under Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Bharat Nirman Volunteers (BNV) under Ministry of Rural Development, Apda Mitra under the National Disaster Management Authority, Mahila Police Volunteers under Ministry Of Women & Child Development, Nyay Mitra under Ministry of Law & Justice, Digital India Volunteer (DIGI – SEVAK) under Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) Volunteers under Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change, Vidyanjali - School Volunteer Programme under Ministry of Human Resource Development, Swachhagrahis/ Community Volunteers under Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (SBA), Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation etc.

5.6 Currently, these schemes run independent of each other. As a result, there's duplication of effort with respect to various common needs such as systems and processes to mobilize and incentivize volunteers effectively, supporting them with capacity building opportunities, determining the impact of volunteering work etc. Also, a master database of all volunteers in the country does not exist today which is required to mobilize volunteers more effectively in emergency situations for disaster management, meeting the needs of a pandemic etc.

5.7 There is thus the need to build an underlying unifying framework that can help streamline planning and execution, provide standardized guidelines for some of the common requirements with respect to recruitment and mobilization, incentives, capacity building options, frameworks for impact measurement of volunteer work etc. as well as allow much stronger partnership amongst various volunteering organizations and schemes. This requires a convening nodal ministry for volunteers and volunteering work to develop the unified working approach. Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports will play this facilitative convening role.

5.8 A unifying framework will be developed to link all schemes to the priority areas of the GoI (education, health, nutrition, water conservation and environmental protection, women's empowerment, Swachh Bharat, etc.). I Individual schemes will be mapped and inter-linkages will be established. All streamlined volunteering schemes will be made easily accessible on a common digital platform, where specific opportunities will be updated in real-time with the appropriate inter-ministerial coordination.

5.9 Flagship schemes such as the NSS and NYKS will be restructured to enable longer-term, strategic volunteering engagement. Youth volunteers will work with local communities and relevant stakeholders to develop lasting, sustainable solutions to local challenges.

5.10 State governments and district authorities will curate 6 to 12-month long youth volunteering opportunities in partnership with local NGOs, higher education institutes etc. Through a call for applications, youths will propose social action volunteering projects to solve local- block- and district-level issues. They will work closely with the district officials to plan and execute the projects. Efforts will be made to define monitoring and evaluation frameworks to assess the impact, outcomes and key performance indicators (KPIs) to track progress. Designated district and block officials will also be responsible for outcomes and ensure project continuity from one volunteer to another.

5.11 The GoI will partner with CSOs, volunteer involving organisations (VIOs) etc., to develop a mentorship initiative and integrate it with the volunteering initiative. Through this channel, expert mentors will support youth volunteers in the design, development and implementation of their social volunteering project. VIOs and CSOs that provide structured and organised youth volunteering opportunities will be encouraged to collaborate and scale-up. All these opportunities will be made available on a common technology platform to enable easy access for the youth.

5.12 The onset of COVID-19 has amplified the role of digital technologies and opened up avenues for volunteering online. Efforts will be undertaken to create and curate online volunteering opportunities and make them available on digital platforms and mobile applications. This can facilitate an increase in the participation of youths from diverse backgrounds and remote locations.

5.13 A year-long, full-time, prestigious PM's National Youth Volunteering Fellowship Programme (PMNYFP) will be launched to offer young people an opportunity to participate in a national-level marquee volunteering project. The fellowship will target recent graduates and early working professionals below 29 years who will go through a rigorous application and selection process. A minimum living allowance or stipend will be provided, along with incentives and access to support networks. Lessons will be drawn from various benchmark programmes run by CSOs in India and other countries while designing the fellowship.

Encourage the youth to volunteer and ensure due rewards and recognition

5.14 Volunteering schemes and programmes must instil a sense of pride and inspire while also offering a valuable opportunity for the personal and professional growth of an individual.

5.15   Efforts will be undertaken to motivate youths to join volunteering networks. Youth icons will be roped in as influencers, role models, and brand ambassadors will be appointed for flagship volunteering schemes and organisations like the NYKS, NSS, and others.

5.16   Special drives will be organised to celebrate volunteering, like National Volunteering Day or National Volunteering Week. Furthermore, annual and monthly themes for volunteering will be announced with nation-wide online and offline campaigns. Webinars, workshops and inspirational discussion panels modelled along the TED talks will be organised in universities and colleges to energise youths to volunteer.

5.17   There is a need to recognise and measure the impact of youth volunteering efforts. An accreditation system will be established to recognise and assign weightage to volunteering experiences for higher studies and employment. Credits will also be awarded for volunteering hours that will be linked to school and university assessment systems. This system will be designed based on best practices from other countries like Japan and South Korea, where volunteering credits contribute towards the course and degree requirements. Universities will also be encouraged to create courses for 'national volunteering' or 'international volunteering'. Additionally, a minimum allowance will be given to volunteers in appreciation of their time and efforts.

5.18   The recognition of volunteering efforts has been limited by the lack of impact measurement. As a largely unpaid activity, volunteering is not tracked systematically. However, defining and capturing the size, scale and impact of volunteering efforts are also complex. The International Labour Organization (ILO) has developed a framework for measuring volunteer work to guide statistical organisations. Efforts will be made towards using the ILO framework to guide data collection and impact measurement. Additionally, universities and academic institutions will be encouraged to study the impact of volunteering.

5.19   National Youth Awards recognise the achievements of youths in different fields of development activities and social services. A renewed focus and energy will be brought to this process. Additionally, a standard framework for incentivizing volunteer opportunities would be developed by MoYAS which all Central Ministries/Departments, State Governments and volunteer programmes will benefit from following. This system will evaluate social action projects to identify and reward high performing volunteers. The performance evaluation will be undertaken on both outcomes (e.g. the number of dropout students re-integrated back to school in the project area) and output measures (e.g. the number of youth engagement activities organised).

Equip youth volunteers with necessary resources and skills

Youth volunteers need to be trained and supported in their volunteering journeys. The GoI will partner with academic institutions, VIOs, CSOs and the private sector to create learning opportunities for volunteers. A common set of training modules and mentorship support systems will be developed in collaboration with various Central Ministries/Departments and relevant organizations.   Further, online and offline courses will be made available through partner agencies. The curriculum will comprise theme-based training manuals, modules, and toolkits to impart skills like critical thinking, problem-solving, and leadership.

5.20 The GoI will create online platforms and opportunities for the youth to reflect on their volunteering experiences and civic engagements. The platform will become a space to discuss societal issues and challenges and support them in their journey of self-awareness and personal development.

5.21 Further, an integrated mentorship and peer support network will be created within existing youth volunteering schemes and networks. Internship and apprenticeship opportunities will be offered to promote 'learning by doing' for young volunteers enrolled in various volunteering programmes. Training in digital media and ICT will ensure that the volunteers are given skills that will also be relevant in a professional capacity.

5.22 High-performing volunteers will be chosen and provided with additional support. This can be in the form of leadership training, career counselling, and other capacity-building programmes. A cohort of Indian youth will also be selected for leadership development and deployed as youth volunteers with UN entities in different countries.

INVEST IN YOUTH LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Expand youth leadership development opportunities through higher education and leadership programmes

5.23 India is increasingly seeing the growth of liberal arts universities and independent schools. These institutions provide students with broader exposure to societal issues, nurture critical thinking and prepare them for policy-related or management roles in the development sector. The youth are also receiving practical experience in governance through fellowships like the Chief Minister's Good Governance Associates fellowship in Haryana and full-time opportunities like the Young Professionals programme at NITI Aayog. These efforts will be expanded in strategic partnerships with civil society and private entities.

5.24 Emphasis will be laid on investing in 'social capital' that enables young people, especially marginalised vulnerable youth, to have the information, mindsets, skills, and human connections needed to pursue and achieve life goals. An effort will be made to develop a framework for the measurement and improvement of social capital in programs serving the youth. A commonly agreed upon measure for social capital of youth can be developed to benchmark and monitor progress, and systematically embed a 'social capital' focus, in youth-oriented policies and programs. The World Bank's Social Capital Assessment Tool (SOCAT), the World Values Survey, Social Capital Index, Social Network Index are some suggested measures of social capital, that focus on key indicators like Volunteerism, Social trust, Informal sociability, Engagement in public affairs, Community and organizational life, Fairness, Voting, Tolerance of diversity etc that can be useful for monitoring progress on social capital investment for the youth.

5.25 Social-emotional skills are of paramount importance for youth leadership development. Universities and academic institutions will be encouraged to conduct diploma and certificate

courses on youth leadership development, focussing on building skills like self-awareness, team building, public speaking, conflict resolution, and more.

5.26   A prestigious public leadership programme will be launched for a small youth cohort. This may be implemented in state universities and under the aegis of premier higher education institutions. The leadership programme will prepare young men and women for roles in the social sector, politics, judiciary etc. Lessons from international schools of government and public leadership like the Matsushita Institute of Government in Japan, Australia and New Zealand School of Government, and Blavatnik School of Government will be considered while designing the programme.

5.27   A Capacity Development Challenge Fund will be set up to support academic institutions and CSOs that focus on building youth capacities. This will help to scale the capacity development efforts and enable the launch of new programmes.

Provide opportunities for youth to engage with issues of governance and politics

5.28   Efforts will be made to enhance the participation of young people in local governance and decision-making. Youth including young women will be further encouraged to participate in gram sabha meetings and the electoral processes. Targeted efforts will be made to include individuals from tribal-dominated areas, LWE districts and other disadvantaged communities.

5.29   National youth parliaments conducted at the block-, district-, state- and national-levels will be strengthened. Youth parliament sessions will be encouraged to simulate actual parliamentary proceedings, with debates on locally relevant issues. Participants, irrespective of their gender, will be encouraged to identify specific recommendations for action by key stakeholders.

5.30   A permanent secretariat structure will be established to provide administrative and research support to the national youth parliaments. The secretariat will also ensure rigour in the execution of youth parliaments with a recognition and rewards system to encourage youth participation. Online and offline channels will be mobilised to position the youth parliaments as a prestigious annual event, and to generate awareness and encourage participation across the country.

5.31   Factoring youth inputs in an inclusive manner into central policy and decision-making is critical. For this purpose, the National Youth Advisory Council (NYAC) will be strengthened. A clear mandate for the NYAC will be defined with sufficient funding to ensure periodic youth consultations. Furthermore, state governments will empower state and district-level youth councils to host regular meetings and gather inputs.

5.32   Young people will be invited to participate in the social audit of key, targeted schemes. Additionally, a youth connect programme will be launched with inter-ministerial collaboration to socialise audit reports and public expenditure records enabling them to engage with government performance data.

Raise youth leadership aspirations through role modelling and wider exposure

5.33   Young people in India need to be inspired to aim higher, aspire for leadership, and invest in self-development. The GoI will launch campaigns across the country to identify and celebrate local heroes and their stories. These campaigns will demonstrate the possibilities and potential paths to achieve them. For those who come from disadvantaged backgrounds held back by cyclical barriers, success stories of role models from similar backgrounds and experiences can help break the cycle. Youth leaders will be identified in each district, and dialogues will be held offline and online to reach a broad cross-section of young people.

5.34   Youth cultural exchanges will be organised to broaden young minds. Exchange programmes such as the Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat and the Tribal Youth Exchange Programme will be promoted and scaled up. Further, youth festivals and youth conferences will be organised to enhance networking and learning opportunities. This is another avenue that can be opened up to private sector investments and can be conducted at a national and international levels.

MOBILISE A ONE-STOP YOUTH ENABLEMENT PLATFORM

Mobilise a youth volunteering and development platform to achieve youth leadership goals

5.35   Existing digital platforms for youth engagement have been limited in scope, coverage and usage. There is a need for a comprehensive digital platform for young people. This will be a one-stop flagship platform for youths and available as a website and a mobile app. The forum will serve several critical functions.

5.36   The platform will serve as a youth engagement and outreach channel. It will mobilise youths to engage with civic and governance issues by sharing their thoughts or deeper engagement via volunteering. The platform will initiate opinion polls, publicise stories of youth role models and champions, enable mentorship interactions, and host youth dialogues to generate traction.

5.37   Secondly, it will serve as a search engine for all youth opportunities. This will include volunteering, youth exchange, youth leadership development and skill-building opportunities offered by government and non-government entities. The platform will also have a contact list of district and block officials and local mentorship networks and partners.

5.38   Furthermore, a National Volunteer Registry- a database of trained and skilled volunteers will be developed and integrated with the platform which could transform the way volunteers are mobilized and deployed in the country with cross-ministry collaboration. This will include a web or app-based platform which will allow for volunteer registration and management. The platform will serve as a secure national database of trained and skilled volunteers and transform how volunteers are mobilised. All Central Ministries/Departments will be able to register their volunteers through this portal. It will be a secure database with readily available, verifiable information regarding each volunteer's identity, qualifications, training and experience. The platform will also have a database of accredited and recognised CSOs and NGOs, with due consideration to data security.

5.39   The platform will also list various volunteering opportunities/ schemes and make them easily accessible to youth. Specific opportunities will be updated regularly. This will allow appropriate

matching of a volunteer's skills and abilities to the needs of various organizations and schemes in line with their interests.

5.40 On the platform, the dynamic, real-time leader boards will rank districts based on community outcomes achieved through the volunteering projects to foster healthy competition and motivate district and block officials to earn rewards and recognition through the impactful work in their region. This will also enable the provision of online credits to volunteers upon project completion.

5.41 Lastly, the platform will serve as a repository for all youth relevant interventions. It will list youth connect pages from across ministries, enable the social audits of schemes and provide updates on crucial youth development metrics.

5.42 The youth volunteering and development platform will be interactive and engaging. It will have features such as notifications and nudges that will be sent to users about their platform activity. Additionally, soft incentives and rewards will be designed based on metrics such as frequency of engagement.

DEVELOP LEADERSHIP IN MARGINALISED YOUTHS

Ensure inclusion of disadvantaged and marginalised youths and develop leadership capacities in them

5.43 Efforts should be made to ensure that all young people have access to volunteering opportunities and are supported to become leaders of tomorrow. All online youth platforms, including the volunteering and development platform, will be accessible by persons living with disabilities. Similarly, all volunteering and leadership initiatives will also include the disadvantaged and marginalised, giving them agency and building their confidence. Through these efforts, it must be ensured that disenfranchised young women and men are aware of the programmes and have the necessary avenues to participate.

5.44 The representation of marginalised youth in leadership initiatives is essential to ensure fair and equitable leadership in the future. Efforts to elevate youth aspirations will especially target marginalised and disadvantaged youths. Youth councils and youth parliaments will have adequate representation from all communities to ensure that youth issues are not neglected. Furthermore, targeted awareness and capacity building programmes will be launched for disadvantaged youths.

HEALTH, FITNESS AND SPORTS

6 Health, Fitness and Sports

Health

6.1 The health of youth is central to a country's ability to grow and thrive, and the promotion of healthy behaviours is essential for a good quality of life. Preventive health action, coupled with an active lifestyle, is critical to developing a young and healthy population that is productive and can contribute to the nation. Aligned with SDG 3, the NYP 2021 envisions a holistic system that 'ensures the health and well-being of youths of all identities'.

6.2 The GoI has launched several schemes to transform the health sector. In 2014, the National Health Mission (NHM) was launched, which subsumed the National Rural Health Mission and the National Urban Health Mission, and other allied health schemes. Ayushman Bharat and POSHAN Abhiyaan were initiated to provide health assurance and nutrition security, respectively; health-adjacent schemes such as WASH and Swachh Bharat Mission were launched to improve overall health and hygiene. These efforts have enhanced key youth health metrics such as maternal mortality and TB deaths over years of sustained interventions.

6.3 Young people all over the world are facing new and evolving health challenges. Further with with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, young people may have been less affected than other age groups by the coronavirus infection itself, but have been disproportionately impacted by the social, educational and economic impacts of the pandemic, especially with educational institutions remaining closed, the youth labour market reduced and widespread concern about mental health implications. The global rise in mental health issues, substance abuse, sexual and reproductive health concerns, the double burden of malnutrition, coupled with the early onset of lifestyle diseases and similar issues are disproportionately affecting the youth. India's youth population is also facing a health challenge in these four critical areas, exacerbated often by limited awareness and stigma associated with these issues. Furthermore, disadvantaged and marginalised communities, including women and tribal populations, face challenges in accessing quality healthcare.

6.4 The National Health Policy (NHP) of 2017 and the National Mental Health Policy (NMHP) of 2014 address some of the above health concerns. The guidelines emphasise investments in school health programmes, provisions for additional mental health specialists, community support networks and leveraging digital technologies to enhance access. Building on these two policies, the NYP 2021 envisages a healthcare system that ensures the holistic well-being of all youths by improving preventative care practices and treatment care across the three primary areas of concern. Further, it outlines efforts towards leveraging technology and data to improve the quality of treatment and special measures required to improve access to quality health care for marginalised youth populations. The recommended outcomes can be achieved through areas of action outlined in Table 4.

Table 4: Areas of action in health

STRENGTHEN PREVENTIVE HEALTHCARE	Integrate education on youth health issues in school and college curriculum
	Create a large-scale campaign to improve youth awareness of critical health issues
STRENGTHEN TREATMENT HEALTHCARE	Ensure adequate availability of mental health professionals and access to quality treatment
	Improve treatment and rehabilitation capacities for substance abuse disorders
	Improve access and capacities for sexual and reproductive health treatment
TRACK YOUTH HEALTH METRICS AND LEVERAGE TECHNOLOGY AND DATA IN HEALTHCARE	Leverage data and technology to track youth health metrics and improve treatment delivery
PROVIDE QUALITY HEALTHCARE ACCESS TO MARGINALISED YOUTHS	Ensure that marginalised youth have access to quality healthcare

STRENGTHEN PREVENTIVE HEALTHCARE

Integrate education on youth health issues in school and college curriculum

6.5 The lack of awareness about critical health issues and any associated stigma limits the ability of youth to practise preventative healthcare. Understanding of these issues can be improved by two key measures: integrating health issues in education and mobilising a national youth health awareness campaign.

6.6 Educational institutions can provide structured learning opportunities to promote mental wellness from an early age by integrating a class on empathy and feelings into the curriculum. Students will learn how to identify their thoughts, feelings and problems, and discuss them with their peer group or a teacher.

6.7 Educational institutions will also be encouraged to ensure that students engage in sports, music, dance, drama, or any other extra-curricular interests to build overall mental well-being and a sense of community and support. Besides, mechanisms will be established to leverage education institutes to help identify mental health issues and provide timely treatment. Furthermore, schools and colleges can provide access to counsellors either within the school or through partnerships with service providers.

6.8 Targeted seminars and workshops will be held in schools and colleges to inform the youth of risks associated with substance use disorders (SUD) and empower them to make better

decisions. These sessions will be open to parents and other caretakers and influencers to encourage a wholesome, healthy lifestyle at home and in the community. The schools and colleges can partner with local CSOs for the development and execution of these programmes.

6.9 Sexual and reproductive health education needs to be incorporated in classrooms to empower youth, especially women of reproductive age, with information and encourage them to seek help when required. Sexual and reproductive health education will be integrated from class 7 onwards as part of the core curriculum. In the early classes, lessons may address the basics of sexual and reproductive health, such as puberty and menstrual hygiene. The topics of discussion can be expanded for the older classes to include safe sex practices and sexually transmitted diseases like HIV AIDS among others.

Create a large-scale campaign to improve youth awareness of critical health issues

6.10 A large-scale national youth health campaign will be developed and launched to address youth health priorities, drive awareness and promote preventative health practices. The movement should also enhance youth knowledge of healthcare rights and mechanisms for grievance redressal. The integration of sports in education is well recognized for fostering holistic development by promoting physical and psychological well-being while also enhancing cognitive abilities of the youth.

6.11 There are many common misconceptions around mental health – that mental health issues are uncommon or that depression is a rich person's disease. The awareness campaign will debunk the myths, share basic preventive practices, and raise awareness about existing initiatives to address mental health issues and the appropriate professionals to seek help. An annual mental health awareness week will boost outreach and advocacy efforts.

6.12 Abstinence as a prevention strategy for SUDs has been found to have limited success. Instead, youth health campaigns will address their addiction through socially interactive methods and awareness programmes that will drive behavioural change. Role-play and other similar interventions will allow the youth to practice the act of refusing substances.

6.13 The stigma surrounding discussions related to sexual and reproductive health prevents young people from talking about their concerns and issues. As a result, they have limited knowledge about safe and healthy practices or seeking access to help. The youth health campaign will encourage open conversations and destigmatise these topics. Additionally, the existing systems will be mobilised to disseminate information that will help both men and women to make better decisions about contraception, vaccination, nutrition, etc.

STRENGTHEN TREATMENT HEALTHCARE

Ensure adequate availability of mental health professionals and access to quality treatment

6.14 Youth face several challenges on socio-economic front particularly in terms of insecure future which often cause stress and anxiety. Efforts will be made towards strengthening preventative mental healthcare which will be complemented by improvements in treatment care.

6.15 Necessary steps will be taken to increase the capacity of institutes that offer accredited degrees for mental health professionals. Even though clinical psychologists need to be certified by the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI), unqualified practitioners continue to exist. Such practices can be curbed by increasing patient awareness about seeking qualified professional help. An accreditation framework will also ensure access to qualified mental health professionals.

6.16 The services of psychologists and psychiatrists will be made available at primary health centres (PHCs), beginning with at least one in a cluster of PHCs. There will also be a clear, defined protocol for primary healthcare providers on managing patients seeking mental health treatment. Furthermore, the state governments may consider tie-ups with third-party mental health clinics for patient referrals and the use of technology to enable sessions over video or voice calls.

6.17 The GoI will also evaluate and develop models to train mental health mentors in rural communities. These mentors will act as first responders and offer psychological first aid to people in crisis. With the help of sector CSOs, the pan-India mental health helpline will be strengthened to provide immediate support with an emphasis on suicide prevention and addiction. Additional mechanisms will also be established to monitor the efficacy of mental health helplines.

6.18 The National Institute of Mental Health Rehabilitation is being established to provide help and services to people with mental illnesses, along with capacity development, policy framing and advancing research in mental health rehabilitation. The GoI will consider making this institute a centre of excellence to guide all significant efforts and decisions regarding mental health policy and services in India.

Improve treatment and rehabilitation capacities for substance use disorders

6.19 The number of affordable rehabilitation centres that treat substance abuse will be increased. Additionally, support groups like Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Nicotine Anonymous (NicA) will be encouraged and scaled-up.

6.20 Current efforts to prevent and treat substance abuse lie with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) and the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE). The MoHFW focuses on prevention (especially concerning tobacco use) and the MoSJE on treatment. Aligning the efforts of the ministries and state governments will build synergy and deliver better results.

Improve access and capacities for sexual and reproductive health treatment

6.21 Reproductive and sexual health issues will be prioritised, and the capacities of the PHCs will be built to respond and address any issues in a sensitive manner. They will be capacitated to provide information to young women on services relating to contraception options, OB/GYN examinations, menstrual health management (MHM), pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) etc. This will empower women to have agency over their body and exercise autonomy when it comes to their sexual and reproductive health.

6.22 PHCs will also conduct regular health camps for young people where they can seek treatment or information on sexual or reproductive health issues in confidence.

TRACK YOUTH HEALTH METRICS AND LEVERAGE TECHNOLOGY AND DATA

Leverage data and technology to track youth health metrics and improve treatment delivery

6.23 There is a pressing need to collect age-segmented health data to enable youth health tracking. Youth-specific health metrics will be added in government health surveys such as the National Family Health Survey (NFHS), National Mental Health Survey (NMHS), and others. In addition to this, efforts will be made to introduce a specific Youth Health Survey, covering mental health, substance abuse, sexual and reproductive health, and other emerging youth concerns. This data will be used to design youth-specific policies and programmes.

6.24 Creating digital health profiles of individuals by digitising and connecting data from various sources can drive preventive health-seeking behaviour and improve treatment care. In the National Health Policy (NHP), the GoI has stated the intent to introduce a uniform system to maintain electronic medical records (EMR) or electronic health records (EHR). These records will be accessible instantly and securely by authorised health practitioners for rapid testing diagnosis, eliminating repetitive and unnecessary investigations. Once the platform is built, digital health records can enable PHCs, mental health workers, pharmacies, etc., to send personalised reminders to patients. EMR or EHR data will also inform health policy decisions and the supply chain for essential medicines. While these use-cases are developed, patient data security and privacy will be ensured at all times.

6.25 A few rural healthcare start-ups and NGOs have mobilised technology to run e-clinics that provide rural community patients access to specialists. These systems can transmit real-time information from patients in rural communities to doctors and experts located remotely. These initiatives will be supported and assessed for at-scale implementation.

PROVIDE QUALITY HEALTHCARE ACCESS TO MARGINALISED YOUTHS

Ensure marginalised youths have access to quality healthcare

6.26 The central and state governments will take steps to ensure that the health needs of tribal youths are met. Awareness programmes will be developed and executed in culturally and contextually relevant ways. Special medical camps will be held to reach tribal populations; the language barrier between health professionals and the tribal community populations will also be addressed using appropriate technology.

6.27 Healthcare utilisation is low among young urban migrants. This is due to the high cost of private healthcare and their inability to access treatment schemes due to the lack of identity documents or remote domicile status. Special mechanisms will be put in place to protect and

promote the health of migrant youth. Additionally, inter-state cooperation mechanisms will be set up along major migration corridors to ensure the provision of health services.

6.28   Efforts will be made to establish simple, standardised procedures to obtain disability certificates. The GoI will also set up rehabilitative centres, especially in rural areas, which will enable the provision of disability aids that are easy to use and maintain.

6.29   Large-scale training programmes will be conducted to sensitise medical professionals to the challenges faced by marginalised groups and orient them towards treating all patients with respect and sensitivity. Such sensitisation training will also be integrated into the curriculum of medical schools and colleges.

6.30   The GoI will also prioritise psychosocial support to the areas and regions affected by violence, conflict, unrest or natural disasters.

Fitness and Sports

6.31   Fitness and sports are vital for personal development, good health, and adds to the prestige and international recognition that a country receives. The NYP 2021 envisions 'a culture of sports and fitness among the youth and achieving national and international eminence.'

6.32   The ubiquity of technology and a competitive education system means that most children and youth spend their free time online or studying rather than outdoors, affecting their overall health and wellness. Even when children want to play, the space for informal, low-cost sports or fitness-related activities can often be limited.

6.33   In 2019, the GoI launched the Fit India Movement, a nation-wide campaign that encourages people to include physical activities and sports in their daily lives. This initiative identified schools as a catalyst for change and introduced programmes like Fit India School Week that was launched across government and private sector schools. Other schemes like Khelo India and NITI Aayog's Sports Revitalisation Action Plan were also launched to upgrade and establish sports infrastructure and facilities. The ambitious Target Olympic Podium Scheme is a flagship programme to aid India's top athletes and fund the development of top candidates for the Olympics. This cluster of initiatives has resulted in progress in fitness and sports in India.

6.34   To strengthen the overall fitness of India's youth, further action is needed to build a vibrant culture of sports and wellness, enable the holistic development of sportspersons, and include marginalised communities in all initiatives and programmes. The NYP 2021 outlines reforms to meet these objectives. Yoga will be promoted as a useful practice to improve physical and mental well-being of youth and to preserve India's rich cultural heritage.

Table 5: Areas of action in fitness and sports

BUILD A CULTURE OF SPORTS AND FITNESS	Develop fitness as a trend and foster healthy habits
	Create an ecosystem to develop sports as a culture from the early years
ENABLE HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT OF SPORTSPERSONS	Expand sports talent search to include rural areas and community competitions
	Develop quality coaching and long-term support for sportspersons
	Continue and increase equitable investment in sports infrastructure
ENSURE INCLUSION OF MARGINALISED YOUTHS IN SPORTS AND FITNESS	Drive special efforts to include marginalised communities in sports and fitness programmes

BUILD A CULTURE OF SPORTS AND FITNESS

Develop fitness as a trend and foster healthy habits

6.35   Pan-India campaigns such as the Fit India Movement will continue to be run in partnership with the private sector, NGOs, and the media and carried out through various channels. These campaigns will be strengthened to include relevant messaging on health factors, such as the link between sleep deprivation and health outcomes and the importance of a healthy diet.

6.36   The GoI's successful initiative of open-air gyms in parks will be scaled to increase coverage. Additionally, more robust real estate regulatory mechanisms will be established and implemented to ensure adequate area allocation for parks in societies.

6.37   Efforts will be made to restrict access to junk food in educational institutes and government workspaces. The GoI will promote locally available, cheaper, nutritious alternatives. The private sector will be encouraged to make similar choices in their offices, canteens etc. Additionally, MSMEs, women's collectives, youth collectives and social enterprises that provide fast but nutritious foods will be supported.

Create an ecosystem to develop sports as a culture from early ages

6.38   Currently, sports in India is primarily emphasised for competitive reasons. This can lead to disenchantment and limit participation among the youth. To this end, programmes like Khelo India were initiated to develop a sports culture across all ages. State-level initiatives have also

increased private sector investment in the field of sports. Furthermore, the popularisation of sports through movies and media has also substantially advanced the sports agenda.

6.39 The GoI will continue its focus on sports and leverage educational institutes to create an ecosystem that promotes participation from a young age. It will ensure the universal implementation of one-hour of sports every day in schools accompanied by specific guidelines to ensure that schools have playgrounds and qualified physical education teachers. Values like teamwork, dedication and motivation will also be inculcated through a structured sports and playtime programme. Efforts will be made to popularise and promote indigenous sports in educational institutes and in the community.

ENABLE HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT OF SPORTSPERSONS

Expand sports talent search to include rural areas and community competitions

6.40 To train and develop a cohort of talented sportspersons, it is essential that they are identified early and provided with the necessary opportunities to build a strong foundation. Currently, initiatives like Khelo India Youth Games play a crucial role in determining children with talent. However, steps will be taken to ensure that the reach of these initiatives will be expanded to include out-of-school children and children studying in rural schools without a playground. Channels to scout for talent will be broadened to include community competitions. Civil society partnerships will also be leveraged to organise amateur competitions in rural areas and communities. The selected athletes and players will be supported with access to suitable facilities, coaches and training.

Develop quality coaching and long-term support for sportspersons

6.41 The GoI will prioritise the training of good physical educators and coaches at a large-scale to provide young people who want to play sports with quality coaching. Mechanisms to monitor the quality and performance of coaches will be strengthened while ensuring that they are given the necessary incentives to perform better. These incentives may include salary increases, promotions, and non-monetary rewards and recognition. A train-the-trainer programme will be developed for identified 'star coaches' to scale their knowledge and develop a cadre of quality coaches.

6.42 Relative to conventional careers, sportspeople have short career spans. Efforts will be made to ensure that a person's involvement in sports creates opportunities for them in later stages, especially after retirement from active sports. This will involve the re-evaluating the current incentive systems such as pensions and job reservations for meritorious sportspersons at various government institutions. Additionally, sportspersons who have represented India at the international level will be granted pensions that align with the current costs of living. Furthermore, existing job opportunities for meritorious athletes will be reviewed to ensure prospects even after retirement from sports.

Increase equitable investment in sports infrastructure

6.43   The GoI will continue to ensure the flow of investment in sports infrastructure in schools, colleges and communities. Particular emphasis will be given to building sports infrastructure in places with fewer facilities, especially rural and poor urban areas. Various investment models, including public-private partnerships (PPPs) and corporate social responsibility (CSR) funds, will be explored, accompanied by clear and specific guidelines to increase corporate involvement.

INCLUSION OF MARGINALISED YOUTHS IN SPORTS AND FITNESS

Drive special efforts to include marginalised communities in sports and fitness programmes

6.44   Efforts will be made to ensure equitable access to sporting infrastructure, equipment, and access to coaches the marginalised population. It will be ensured that female players and players with disabilities have access to the necessary resources and facilities, including appropriate sportswear, aids and equipment.

6.45   Targeted efforts will be made to include marginalised communities in fitness outreach and talent scouting programmes. The support of civil society partnerships will be leveraged to implement large-scale community campaigns that promote sports among women, tribal populations, disabled persons etc. And accomplished sportspersons from these communities will be incentivised to participate in such campaigns.

6.46   The GoI will continue to provide support for fair coverage of all sports in the media and public eye. These will include but not be limited to indigenous sports, women's sports, and disability athletics. The Rural Olympics in Punjab is a useful model for encouraging indigenous sports at the grassroots-level and will be studied for lessons that can be adopted.

6.47   Finally, there are only a few schemes that ensure better equity in sports and fitness. Efforts will be made to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of these schemes and ensure equitable impact across all other programmes.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

7 Social Justice

7.1 The Constitution of India promises all its citizens social, economic and political justice and guarantees their fundamental rights. It upholds the diversity of the country and promotes the core values of individual dignity, fraternity, and unity of the nation. In this context, the NYP 2021 furthers the 'creation of a just and equal society based on mutual respect, where the youth feel safe, included and able to exercise their rights'.

7.2 The GoI has implemented a range of social protection measures, both legal and programmatic, to prevent discrimination against marginalised and vulnerable groups. This includes women, children, SCs, STs, OBCs, religious minorities, and persons with disabilities among others. The Indian constitution guarantees the right to equality, the right to freedom and the right against exploitation. Additionally, the GoI has passed legislation to uphold the values of justice, liberty and equality. This includes the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, National Commission for Backward Classes Act, Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act and the annulment of Section 377 by the Supreme Court. As the recent pandemic has unfolded, young people especially are caught in a paradox. Youth that were already facing challenges (such as those living in poverty, living with a disability or in challenging family situations) are especially vulnerable in the aftermath of the pandemic. The likely 'slow burn' impacts of educational and employment constraints, and the role the pandemic is playing in widening health inequalities will need to be dealt with effective and timely interventions.

7.3 Over the years, technology has been leveraged to expand access to legal aid, and the Scheme for Action Research and Studies on Judicial Reforms has been launched to improve overall justice delivery. Legal literacy clubs have also been expanded to continue to raise awareness about constitutional rights and duties. Apart from these efforts, several central ministries have launched initiatives for the social, educational and economic development of marginalised populations. Various psychological, social and legal support mechanisms have also been established in recent years.

7.4 These efforts need to be strengthened and supported by new initiatives to deliver social justice to India's youth. This will be done through reforms that will empower the youth and ensure their safety. There is a need to strengthen the legal system for the faster delivery of justice and provide holistic support for the rehabilitation of juvenile youths. Finally, special efforts are required to ensure social justice for marginalised and vulnerable youths. The NYP 2021 outlines the key areas of action in Table 6.

Table 6: Areas of action for social justice

EMPOWER AND SAFEGUARD THE YOUTH	**Build a value-based social fabric to reduce acts of discrimination and violence**
	Provide the youth with safe spaces, knowledge, and support services
	Raise youth awareness regarding rights and initiatives related to legal aid
	Prevent and address cybercrimes that disproportionately affect the youth
ENABLE FASTER DELIVERY OF JUSTICE AND STRENGTHEN JUVENILE REHABILITATION	Enable faster delivery of justice through strengthening the legal system
	Ensure effective implementation of the Juvenile Justice Act and rehabilitation of delinquent youth
ENSURE SOCIAL JUSTICE FOR MARGINALISED AND VULNERABLE YOUTHS	Review and enhance all social protection schemes for inclusive impact

EMPOWER AND SAFEGUARD THE YOUTH

Build a value-based social fabric to reduce acts of discrimination and violence

7.5 The first step towards empowering the youth is to ensure their safety by working towards a society built on core social values that can prevent acts of discrimination and violence. As highlighted in the Education chapter, efforts will be made to teach social values and human rights through curriculum and teaching reform. These reforms will be designed to underscore the principles of equality and social justice, with the intent of eliminating prejudice and bias.

7.6 To achieve a real, sustained change in mindset and practice, behaviour change communication strategies will be implemented. The plan will employ an interactive and targeted approach to inform and influence youth attitudes and work towards achieving a change in community behaviour patterns.

7.7 The central and state governments will use the services of the NSS and NYKS volunteers, VIOs, CSOs, Faith-Based Organisations and other influential networks to emphasise social inclusion and strengthen the social fabric.

7.8 In order to redress the grievances of youths, a national level grievance redressal mechanism will be put into place. The State Governments will be encouraged to set up dedicated helplines for youths to handle grievances on account of discrimination and any form of violence. It will encourage youth to express their grievances freely and confidentially and foster a well-balanced environment for the youth to prosper.

Provide the youth with safe spaces, knowledge, and support services

7.9 It is essential to provide the youth with safe spaces where they can share their concerns and access knowledge of legal and social protections. The GoI will mobilise CSOs and the private sector to leverage the existing facilities and networks like youth clubs, Samaj Kalyan Kendra and others to create safe spaces for the youth. Furthermore, new facilities will be designated where needed.

7.10 A youth safe space will be provided in every block and district and will be made easily identifiable by using a recognisable logo, symbol, or name. Through awareness drives that will be carried out periodically, youth, especially those from marginalised communities, will know about these spaces and their support services. Spaces like these will thrive on inclusivity and prioritise support to the marginalised and disadvantaged youth.

7.11 The spaces will provide a range of services, such as psychosocial support, access to legal aid, and counselling. These spaces will be equipped to register complaints of violence, harassment, and discrimination, and ensure complete privacy. Additional counselling centres may also be set up in schools after-hours as needed.

7.12 The GoI will support operationalising all sanctioned One Stop Centres, which aim to help women affected by violence. State governments and other stakeholders will ensure that these centres are adequately staffed with medical, legal and mental health professionals and integrated with existing helplines.

Raise youth awareness regarding rights and initiatives related to legal aid

7.13 There is a need to increase youth awareness on legal rights and the aid available to them through the various schemes and initiatives. The National Legal Services Authority had envisaged a legal literacy club in every high school under the leadership of the state legal services authorities. Furthermore, the state governments will provide the necessary support to ensure that these clubs are set up and are functional.

7.14 State and district legal services authorities will be leveraged for improved delivery of legal aids and services at the youth safe spaces. Efforts will include awareness drives, especially key schemes like the Right to Information Act, the Central Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS), Tele-Law and the Nyaya Bandhu access scheme.

7.15 Nation-wide campaigns will be conducted at periodic intervals, and both offline and online platforms will be mobilised to disseminate information on legal and justice support available for the youth. This will cover a range of media such as a radio programme focusing on legal and justice issues with live call-ins and e-kiosks implemented at-scale to impart legal information. The e-kiosks piloted under the Access to Justice programme and launched by the Department of Justice in partnership with UNDP will be assessed and refined for scale-up.

Prevent and address cybercrimes that disproportionately affect youth

7.16 The increased access and dependence on digital technology has resulted in a global rise in cybercrime, which disproportionately affects the youth. In India, too, youth are increasingly

vulnerable to cybercrimes. To effectively address the issue, GoI will strengthen its approach through reforms across prevention, resolution and rehabilitation of those affected by cybercrimes. Cyber law pertaining to, safeguarding data and privacy, addressing cybercrimes, safeguarding intellectual property, will need to be dynamic for upholding safety and security under the Cyber Law IT Act 2000, Companies Act 2013 and National Institute of Standards and Technology compliance.

7.17   To prevent cybercrimes, digital literacy will be included in the curriculum in schools and colleges that will teach components on online safety measures. The module will train children and youth on steps to be safe online, to identify cyberbullying (as a victim or a bystander), and where and how to seek help if faced with a cyber-threat. The curriculum will cover the issues of privacy and security risks associated with sharing and accessing information online. Additionally, education institutions can organise cyber safety week, and awareness drives to supplement curriculum lessons and provide practical training to the youth and staff. The GoI will also encourage education institutions and workplaces to set up mechanisms to manage the incidence of cybercrimes, underscored by a zero-tolerance policy.

7.18   Information on existing systems for reporting cybercrimes and ways to access support is the first step to resolution and can be disseminated through educational institutions and broader campaigns. Available platforms, such as the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal, will be strengthened, and law enforcement officers will receive special training on managing and conducting investigations of cybercrimes against children and youth while ensuring victim privacy and protection. The GoI will encourage and support CSOs, VIOs and private sector partners to create a community of online volunteers to help young people against cyber-bullying and cyber-threats.

7.19   Efforts will be made to enhance the number and the capacity of counsellors who can support and rehabilitate young people who are either victims or perpetrators of cybercrime. Peer-to-peer support groups will be created in partnership with industry associations, academic institutes, NGOs, VIOs and other private sector entities. Additionally, focused capacity building efforts will be made for Childline India, the 24-hour helpline for child victims of cybercrime.

ENABLE FASTER DELIVERY OF JUSTICE AND STRENGTHEN JUVENILE REHABILITATION

Enable faster delivery of justice for the youth by strengthening the legal system

7.20   Gram Nyayalayas were conceptualised as the first point-of-contact for the resolution of legal issues. The central and state governments are committed to strengthening the existing Gram Nyayalayas and operationalising new ones to ensure that the youth have speedy and easy access to justice. This reform will also reduce the caseload burden in the higher levels of court.

7.21   Efforts will be made to leverage the skills of current law students to make legal aid available to youth and juveniles, especially in rural areas. Students pursuing law in national and state law schools and universities will be incentivised to undertake judicial fellowships or internships in exchange for academic credit.

7.22 Legal aid schemes that use digital media, such as Tele-Law and Nyaya Bandhu, will be scaled up to be more effective. Nyaya Bandhu, a pro bono app launched in 2019, allows individuals from marginalised groups to connect with volunteer advocates. The GoI will review these efforts and assess them for impact and scale-up.

7.23 The GoI will develop and implement a judicial reforms strategy to reduce many pending cases. The strategy will be complemented by increasing the resources and staff available to the National Human Rights Commission. These efforts will ensure that complaints of discrimination and human rights violations are investigated without delay.

Ensure effective implementation of the Juvenile Justice Act and rehabilitation of delinquent youth

7.24 To ensure the Juvenile Justice Act's effective implementation, the central and state governments will constitute juvenile justice boards, child welfare committees and district child protection units in districts that do not already have them on a priority basis. These bodies act on behalf of children in conflict with the law, as well as at-risk and vulnerable youth. Any vacancies in existing juvenile justice boards and child welfare committees will be filled urgently, and regular meetings will be ensured thereon. State governments will also provide for the effective utilisation of juvenile justice funds.

7.25 The central and state governments will establish special homes, observation homes, places of safety and aftercare homes for delinquent youth in every state. They will ensure the availability of qualified psychosocial support; an adequate number of probation officers will also be ensured for effective rehabilitation and reintegration. Rehabilitation models that have successfully brought down recidivism rates will be studied for implementation in other states.

7.26 The Juvenile Justice Board, special juvenile police units, district child protection units, district legal services authority, education department, NGOs, and other bodies that work with juveniles will be sensitised and trained on delinquent youth's specific needs. Every young person who enters the juvenile justice system will undergo a psychosocial assessment. They will be assigned a counsellor who will incorporate the findings to develop a care plan for them. Additional efforts will be made to ensure that the youth are provided with the support they need to follow the care plan.

SOCIAL JUSTICE FOR MARGINALISED AND VULNERABLE YOUTHS

Enhance and review all social protection schemes for inclusive impact

7.27 Adhering to the inclusive approach of *Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas*, the GoI has launched several social protection schemes to support vulnerable and marginalised groups. Examples include the Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram (PMJVK), Accessible India Campaign, North East Special Infrastructure Development Scheme, Revised Scheme of Development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups, and One Stop Centres. Investments in social protection measures will be continued and augmented; existing schemes will also be reviewed to guide special efforts towards inclusion and empowerment.
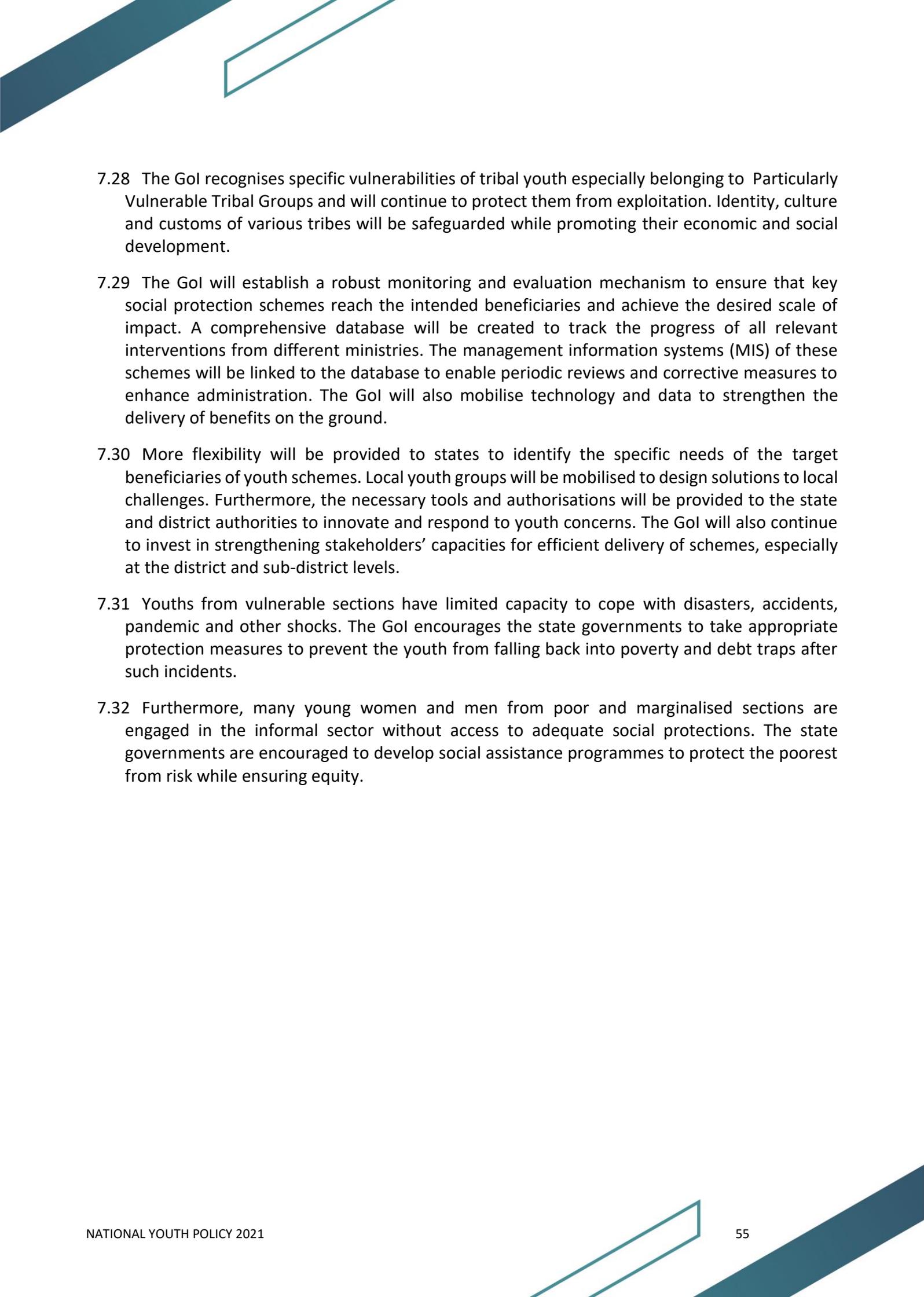
7.28 The GoI recognises specific vulnerabilities of tribal youth especially belonging to Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups and will continue to protect them from exploitation. Identity, culture and customs of various tribes will be safeguarded while promoting their economic and social development.

7.29 The GoI will establish a robust monitoring and evaluation mechanism to ensure that key social protection schemes reach the intended beneficiaries and achieve the desired scale of impact. A comprehensive database will be created to track the progress of all relevant interventions from different ministries. The management information systems (MIS) of these schemes will be linked to the database to enable periodic reviews and corrective measures to enhance administration. The GoI will also mobilise technology and data to strengthen the delivery of benefits on the ground.

7.30 More flexibility will be provided to states to identify the specific needs of the target beneficiaries of youth schemes. Local youth groups will be mobilised to design solutions to local challenges. Furthermore, the necessary tools and authorisations will be provided to the state and district authorities to innovate and respond to youth concerns. The GoI will also continue to invest in strengthening stakeholders' capacities for efficient delivery of schemes, especially at the district and sub-district levels.

7.31 Youths from vulnerable sections have limited capacity to cope with disasters, accidents, pandemic and other shocks. The GoI encourages the state governments to take appropriate protection measures to prevent the youth from falling back into poverty and debt traps after such incidents.

7.32 Furthermore, many young women and men from poor and marginalised sections are engaged in the informal sector without access to adequate social protections. The state governments are encouraged to develop social assistance programmes to protect the poorest from risk while ensuring equity.

Summary of Recommendations

8 Summary of Recommendations

This NYP 2021 is a ten-year vision document that seeks to unlock the potential of India's youth by 2030, in alignment with the global SDGs. The five priority areas outlined to usher such advancements include education, employment and entrepreneurship; youth leadership and development; health, fitness and sports; and social justice. The policy frameworks and guidelines require technical and financial commitments to enable equitable progress of the youth while ensuring inclusion in the design, planning and implementation of specific schemes and programmes. The key thrust areas of each of the five sectors are summarised below.

Education: Education and training systems will be strengthened and made more relevant through curricular reforms, enhancing teacher capacity, integrating value-based education, and scaling-up delivery of vocational education. In addition, the NEET youth will be supported through targeted learning programmes while at the same time reintegrating dropouts and out-of-school youth. The systems will adopt inclusive pedagogies and ensure trained teachers, counsellors, and therapists are available to disadvantaged youth.

Employment and Entrepreneurship: To revitalise the rural economy of India, agriculture and allied spheres will offer more viable, income-generating opportunities for the rural youth. For urban and peri-urban areas, micro-regional employment strategies will ensure the development of district-specific industries and SME cluster development through strong district-level ownership of the employment agenda. Furthermore, entrepreneurship education, mentorship networks and other support systems will help develop a more robust entrepreneurship ecosystem. Finally, informal and gig economy workers will be supported through social security provisions and effective demand-supply matching through technology-based employment platforms. Skilling reforms and efforts to drive awareness on government initiatives and schemes, combined with systemic support to the young urban migrant population and marginalised youth segments will chart the path for a more financially assured youth

Youth Leadership and Development: The GoI will invest in youth leadership by strengthening the youth volunteering ecosystem. The GoI will develop a unified working approach to streamline planning and execution of various volunteering schemes run or supported by the Central Ministries/Departments. Towards this end, the MoYAS will play a facilitative convening role for promoting youth volunteering in the country. It will provide standardized tool kits for recruitment & mobilization, framework for rewards & incentives, frameworks for impact measurement of volunteering schemes and create capacity building options. Thus, through streamlined opportunities, mentorship and due rewards and recognition MoYAS will cultivate a spirit of volunteerism among youth. Youth, especially the most marginalised, will be equipped with the necessary resources and skills for leadership roles through sustained investment in higher education and targeted leadership programmes, enhanced opportunities to engage with governance and politics, with the support of mentors and with adequate exposure. A youth volunteering and development platform will be mobilised to identify and build a cadre of youth leaders across the country.

Health, Fitness and Sports: Preventative healthcare practices will be integrated into the education curriculum and emphasised through large-scale awareness campaigns to ensure the

holistic well-being of youth. In addition to quality treatment facilities, youth health issues will be prioritised like mental illnesses, sexual and reproductive health, and treatment and rehabilitation capacities for substance use disorders will be pivotal. Data will be leveraged to track the progress in youth health metrics and improve access to quality treatments. Finally, specific measures will be undertaken to provide quality healthcare access for all marginalised young women and men, including tribal, disabled, migrant, and other disadvantaged segments. A culture of sports, fitness and healthy habits will be fostered among the youth. The GoI will also invest in the holistic development of sportspersons through sports talent searches that will be expanded to be more comprehensive and inclusive while ensuring the availability of good coaches across the country. Equitable investments will be made in sporting infrastructure, and long-term support will be provided to promising sportspersons. The policy also recommends special efforts to include marginalised segments in sports and fitness programmes.

Social Justice: Empowering and safeguarding the youth from marginalised and vulnerable communities will require investments in building a value-based social fabric. Efforts will be made to reduce acts of discrimination and violence while also providing the youth with safe spaces, knowledge, and support services for their social welfare. Raising youth awareness about their rights and initiatives related to legal aid will be crucial for these efforts. In terms of the response, the legal systems will be strengthened to ensure speedier delivery of justice, especially the Juvenile Justice Act's effective implementation and building a more robust system for juvenile rehabilitation among the delinquent youth. Specific efforts will also be made to address cybercrimes.

Key policy interventions proposed for each of the five priority areas are also summarised in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Priority areas and action imperatives of the National Youth Policy 2021

PRIORITY AREA	ACTION IMPERATIVES
EDUCATION *'ensure access to equitable and quality education'*	**Make the education system relevant for the youth** – incorporate 21st-century skills, value-based education and large-scale delivery of vocational education linked to employment
	Support the NEET Youth (youths not in education, employment or training) through retention and reintegration efforts, physical or online access expansion, and targeted learning programmes
	Build an inclusive education system for the marginalised and disadvantaged youths through targeted schemes, inclusive resources and pedagogies, and appropriately trained teachers and counsellors
EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP *'empower youth to grow enterprises and find sustainable employment'*	**Revitalise the rural economy and retain youth** with attractive income opportunities within agriculture and agriculture-allied areas
	Generate employment in urban/peri-urban areas with micro-region-specific employment strategies that promote district-specific industries and SME cluster development
	Strengthen youth entrepreneurship with necessary investments in entrepreneurship education, mentorship and support systems, and targeted support for social entrepreneurs
	Support informal and gig economy workers, and enable gig sector growth with adequate social security provisions and leveraging demand-supply matching technology
	Drive overall employment by **reforming skilling, rationalising all schemes basis outcomes**, and providing **specific support to urban migrants and marginalised youth segments**
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND LEADERSHIP *'empower youth to be the leaders of tomorrow'*	**Strengthen the youth volunteering ecosystem** through streamlined opportunities, mentorship, and due rewards and recognition
	Invest in youth leadership development through targeted programmes, opportunities to engage with issues of governance and politics, and broader exposure to raise aspirations
	Mobilise a one-stop youth enablement platform to achieve youth volunteering and leadership goals
	Develop leadership capacities in marginalised youths through specific inclusion measures
HEALTH *'ensure health and well-being of all youths'*	**Strengthen preventive healthcare practices among youth** through integration with the education curriculum and large-scale awareness campaigns
	Strengthen healthcare for mental health issues, substance use disorders and sexual and reproductive health concerns
	Track youth health metrics, and use data and technology to improve access and quality of treatments
	Undertake specific measures to provide quality healthcare access for all marginalised youths
FITNESS AND SPORTS *'develop a culture of fitness and sports, and achieve eminence'*	**Build a culture of sports and fitness among youth**
	Enable holistic development of sportspersons through comprehensive talent searches, quality coaching, equitable investments in sporting infrastructure and long-term support beyond sporting careers
	Undertake special efforts to include marginalised segments in sports and fitness programmes
SOCIAL JUSTICE *'create a safe, just and equal society for the youth'*	**Empower and safeguard the youth through various measures** including value-based education, provision of safe spaces with support services, increasing awareness regarding rights and legal-aid and specific efforts to address cybercrime
	Enable faster delivery of justice and strengthen juvenile rehabilitation
	Review and strengthen all social protection schemes to ensure social justice for marginalised and vulnerable youths

MONITORING AND EVALUATION AND THE PATH FORWARD

9 Monitoring and Evaluation and the Path Forward

9.1   The effective implementation of the NYP 2021 requires simultaneous, coordinated action from both government and non-government stakeholders. The effort requires a plan, resources and regular updates to deliver the ten-year vision for the Indian youth.

9.2   A robust monitoring and evaluation system will indicate the progress made towards implementing the NYP 2021. These efforts, underscored by the principles of transparency and accountability, will deliver a future in which India's youth can thrive.

9.3   Policy performance monitoring will lay the roadmap, guiding the policymakers and custodians on the right path to its intended final impact. Tracking select parameters will help indicate the reach and effectiveness and achieve its short-, intermediate-, and long-term objectives. Additionally, policy evaluation will help assess the implementation as measured against its scope, desired deliverables, and resource requirements. These evaluations can be used as a framework for decision-making and mid or near-end course corrections as required.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE NYP 2021

9.4   Execution of the recommendations of NYP 2021 requires concerted actions from the central government, state governments and mobilisation of various cross-sectoral stakeholders such as CSOs, VIOs, academic institutions, private sector entities, and others.

9.5   To ensure synergy of efforts towards youth leadership and volunteering, the MoYAS will orchestrate a joint planning exercise with all concerned ministries and departments. This will provide an opportunity to central ministries and departments to share their plans and collaboration opportunities will be identified. Convenings will also be held to share achievements and progress using a common approach for impact tracking and create a consolidated view of volunteering impact. This will also enable establishing the economic value of volunteering scientifically through various well-coordinated labour bureau surveys etc.

9.6   To ensure that the efforts of the various entities are aligned, there is a need to identify the key metrics that indicate the common policy objective. These metrics will demonstrate the measure of state-level initiative and action and the efficacy of the programmes and interventions.

9.7   Table 8 identifies the proposed metrics in line with the five priority areas of the NYP 2021 and the policy objectives under each theme, i.e., education, employment and entrepreneurship, youth leadership and development, health, fitness and sports, and social justice. The metrics against each of these five areas will be monitored and evaluated on an annual basis. Additionally, key youth development indices for the country will be aligned with these metrics to enable uniform tracking across India.

9.8   The systematic monitoring and evaluation of policy efforts will be accompanied by transparent information sharing. Each ministry will provide updates on the metrics along the priority area relevant to its purview. The MoYAS and the inter-ministerial committees can then collectively

establish the information update in line with the various policy prescriptions. The efforts of various ministries will also be consolidated by the MoYAS and shared publicly on a central platform.

9.9 The NYP 2014 recommended the biennial publication of a Status of Youth report intended to provide an update on all youth-related interventions, and the identification of new challenges for the youth. Committed efforts will be made to ensure that the report is prepared every two years. Furthermore, the scope of the report will include a comprehensive review of the status of youth.

9.10 The MoYAS will undertake efforts to socialise the youth updates along with various youth policy prescriptions, as well as the Status of Youth report. All reports and updates will be made available publicly on the one-stop youth portal making the information relevant to the youth accessible to them.

Table 8: Metrics for tracking progress along each priority area

PRIORITY AREA	METRICS FOR TRACKING PROGRESS				
EDUCATION	GER in higher and secondary education (overall and by gender, social categories etc.) Number of youth empowered for seeking further education via national and other scholarship schemes		Number of NEET youths (including dropouts, Out of School youth)	Number of states implementing reformed secondary education curriculum	Number of schools providing vocational education; number of students enrolled in vocational education
EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP	Youth unemployment rate (overall and by gender, social categories etc.)	Average agricultural household income	Number of states with district-wise employment plans	Digital Skilling of youth in particular tribal and other vulnerable youth; Percentage placement post skilling (after > 6 months)	Percentage of enterprises with > 5 employees (including collectives and SHGs)
YOUTH LEADERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT	Number of youth registered in formal / organised volunteering initiatives in the last 12 months (public and private, including NSS and NYKS) Number of inter-ministerial signed agreements with the objective of furthering the youth leadership and development agenda, with a focus on tribal, LGBTQI+, youth with disabilities and other vulnerable youth groups		Number of active users on MoYAS youth platform	Number of participants in youth parliaments	Number of elected PRI representatives under the age of 30

HEALTH	Number of states with specific health action plans or initiatives for youth , with additional metrics observed for vulnerable youth groups		Reduced rate of HIV and AIDS, suicide, maternal mortality, substance use and dependence among youths	Mental health professionals to population ratio	Number of tribal youths and disabled youth accessing healthcare
FITNESS AND SPORTS	Prevalence of obesity among youth	Number of schools/ institutions with playgrounds	Number of SAI coaches Number of schools/ institutions with PE teachers	Number of national sports academies in non-metro cities	Tally of medals in Olympics, Paralympics and Commonwealth Games
SOCIAL JUSTICE	Number of blocks with operational 'youth safe spaces' , with additional metrics observed for vulnerable youth groups	Number of legal literacy clubs established and operationalised in each state	Percentage of youth undertrials	Recidivism rate among juvenile delinquents	Ranking on Global Cybersecurity Index, SDG Gender Index and Global Inclusiveness Index

THE PATH FORWARD TO IMPLEMENTING THE NYP 2021

Increase investment towards youth development

9.11 The GoI spent approximately INR 92,000 crore on the agenda of youth in FY2012 (NYP 2014) on youth-targeted schemes in education, health, skill development and other areas. The 2014 policy also considered non-targeted schemes (about INR 55,000 crore) for which the youth were significant beneficiaries. This investment increased by INR 65,000 crore to INR 157,000 crore in FY2018.

9.12 The allocation of the budget to the youth agenda remains constant at nearly 18% average, across all ministries with over 50% of the expenditure committed to three ministries, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship. Going forward, all ministries should review the budget allocations towards their youth agenda and consider increasing it to enable the actions outlined in this policy.

9.13   The budget for the MoYAS in FY2020 was INR 2,200 crore and is incrementally growing at 0.01% of India's GDP – a smaller allocation when compared to similar ministry budgets in some lesser-developed other countries in Asia like Bahrain and Nepal at 0.2% of the GDP, and Bangladesh at 0.1% of the GDP. To adequately stimulate youth development and contribute to

national development, the GoI will need to re-examine the financial resource requirements of the MoYAS based on the prescriptions of the NYP 2021.

Undertake action planning for various government entities and states

9.14 The NYP 2021 provides a roadmap and policy prescriptions across priority areas that span the purview of several ministries. The proposed agenda calls detailed action plans from various government entities at the state, district, block and village-level, as per capacity and governance mandate. The NYP 2021 also calls for supporting governance structures to review the actions and outcomes and ensure progress.

9.15 The MoYAS will orchestrate the detailed action plans and provide implementation support to all the ministries working on youth affairs. In addition, an inter-ministerial committee will be established as a governing body to meet periodically and monitor the progress of all efforts and outcomes of the proposed activities.

9.16 Based on NYP 2021, state governments will develop youth policies customised to state-level challenges and contexts. The MoYAS, in a pivotal role, will provide additional support in policy formulation and implementation across all states and enable knowledge sharing among them.

Engage the youth in dialogue through various channels

9.17 Proactive engagement with the youth can elevate the planning and implementation of schemes and interventions for their development. A deeper understanding of their motivations, aspirations and concerns can enable all stakeholders to refine their efforts for greater impact.

9.18 The MoYAS, as the custodian of all youth-related government endeavours, will drive efforts for stronger youth engagement. It will launch a large-scale campaign to engage with the youth through various spaces, platforms, and media to obtain a comprehensive understanding of their views and insights. The MoYAS will also outline relevant guidelines for the National Youth Advisory Council to ensure sufficient mobilisation for youth engagement.

9.19 All relevant ministries will launch independent Youth Connect programmes. While this was included in the youth policy of 2014, special efforts are necessary to ensure implementation across the board. As a part of this effort, all ministries will create space on their respective websites for information on youth-relevant schemes. The MoYAS will leverage its existing volunteer network and the district youth officers (DYO) channel to facilitate periodic youth consultations with all line ministries. A schedule of youth consultations with ministries, assigning specific months for specific ministries, will be created, and shared each year.

9.20 All the action areas above relate the efforts that the central and state governments will have to undertake in the coming years. This policy is also an invitation to the youth to participate in shaping their future. Young people are invited to access the various online and offline channels available to engage with the GoI and its policies. They are encouraged to be proactive and responsible citizens and contribute to their self-development and the progress of their communities.

9.21 If you are between 15 and 29 years old,

- o Provide your thoughts on the youth policy *(email and links here)*

- o Share the youth policy with your friends *(social media links)*

- o Engage with the MoYAS *(contact info here)*

APPENDIX

10 Appendix

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AA	Alcoholics Anonymous
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ASEEM	Atmanirbhar Skilled Employee Employer Mapping
BBBP	Beti Bachao Beti Padhao
CPGRAMs	Central Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DDU-GKY	Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana
DYO	District Youth Officers
EHR	Electronic Health Record
EMR	Electronic Medical Record
FPO	Farmer Producer Organisations
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
GoI	Government of India
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IEDC	Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development Centres
IEDSS	Inclusive Education of Disabled at Secondary Stage
IIM	Indian Institute of Management
ILO	International Labour Organization
INI	Institute of National Importance
ITI	Industrial Training Institute
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transsexual, Queer, Intersex, Asexual
LWE	Left Wing Extremism
MHM	Menstrual Hygiene Management
MIS	Management Information System
MoHFW	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
MoYAS	Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports
MRD	Ministry of Rural Development

MSDE	Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship
MSJE	Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
NAS	National Achievement Survey
NCC	National Cadet Corps
NCS	National Career Scheme
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NEP	National Education Policy
NFHS	National Family Health Survey
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NHM	National Health Mission
NHP	National Health Policy
NICA	Nicotine Anonymous
NIMR	National Institute of Mental Health Rehabilitation
NMHP	National Mental Health Policy
NMHS	National Mental Health Survey
NPYAD	National Programme for Youth and Adolescent Development
NSQF	National Skills Qualification Framework
NSS	National Service Scheme
NUHM	National Urban Health Mission
NYAC	National Youth Advisory Council
NYKS	Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan
NYP	National Youth Policy
OB/GYN	Obstetrician-Gynecologist
ODOP	One District One Product
PGI	Performance Grading Index
PHC	Primary Healthcare Centre
PMEGP	Pradhan Mantri Employment Generation Programme
PMKVY	Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana
PMMY	Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana
PMNYFP	Prime Minister's Youth Volunteering Fellowship Programme
PPP	Public Private Partnership
RCI	Rehabilitation Council of India

RMSA	Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan
RUSA	Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan
SAMVAY	Skills Assessment Metric for Vocational Assessment
SC	Scheduled Caste
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEQI	School Education Quality Index
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
SMSA	Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan
SPMRM	Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Rurban Mission
SSA	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
SSC	Sector Skill Councils
ST	Scheduled Tribes
STD	Sexually Transmitted Disease
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
SUD	Substance Use Disorder
TB	Tuberculosis
UGC	University Grants Commission
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
VIO	Volunteer Involving Organisations
VSHSE	Vocationalisation of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene