

## Youth in Post-Independence India: An Overview

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### INTRODUCTION

The study of Indian youth involves a discussion of several dimensions. It is not difficult to make quantitative estimates of the proportion of youth in a population: generally the age-group fifteen to twenty-five is regarded as constituting youth, but in some cases, the age-group fifteen to twenty-nine has been included in this category. Youth cannot be defined, however, only in biological and demographic terms; it is also a matter of recognition by society and there are variations from one society to another in the definition of youth. The socio-cultural dimension of youth is significant for every society. Youth can be understood, thus, in terms of different groupings and criteria of stratification in a society exemplified by class and caste. Then again, the different socio-cultural variables like education, occupation, income, standard of living, and rural-urban differences have to be taken into account when one talks about youth. While youth may be a statistical category in terms of a particular age group, in reality it cannot be treated as a homogeneous group because of the interplay of the socio-cultural factors noted above. All the same, it is important to enquire into the demographic dimension of youth because the proportion which the youth bear to a given population at a given point of time has important socio-cultural and political implications, particularly when the youth have been sensitized to their rights and to the share they should have in the processes of decision-making. Authors like Moller (1958) and Apter (1965) have emphasized the increased significance of youth in terms of the higher percentage of youth in a population both in developed and in developing societies. Moller says, "In any community, the presence of a large number of adolescents and young adults influences the temper of life: and the greater the proportion of young people, the greater the likelihood of cultural and political change" (Moller 1968:454).

To the extent that the youth are kept away from the main-stream of life, they constitute a threat to the political stability of the society concerned. Apter (1965) also observes that youth want equality as a right so that they can succeed to adulthood and enjoy positions of authority. That is why the young are willing to accept political religions.

Another aspect of youth that needs attention is the expectation of the society has from it with respect to the tasks of national development and social transformation. In the Third World it is believed that the youth can bear this responsibility because of their physical energy, freshness of outlook, and the desire and capacity to innovate. To be able to undertake this role effectively, it is essential that they should have a share in authority and the decision-making processes. One has to enquire, therefore, into the nature of the society and particularly into the genesis and distribution of authority in the society before one could sit in judgement about the inculcation of responsibility or otherwise by the youth. In this context it is also necessary to understand the "youth culture" in society. There is no denying the fact that the very concept of youth culture is foreign to the Third World and particularly to India. The absence of an identifiable youth culture, when linked with certain other features of the social system, renders the problem even more difficult. In our discussion on Indian youth, we shall therefore begin with some of the special features of Indian society which have implications for the behaviour and functioning of youth.

### HISTORY OF INDIAN SOCIETY

In the first place, one should mention the phases of life and the allocation of responsibility and authority in Indian society based on biological age and appropriate rituals demarcating divisions in terms of age. In the traditional Hindu system, life is viewed in terms of four well-marked stages with relevant responsibility and authority, or the denial of it. The youth enjoyed no authority, but were enjoined to prepare to shoulder it in the second stage. In this system age was respected and as such young age was a matter of disadvantage. While the notion of the stages of life was confined to Hindus, respect and reverence for age and the authority enjoyed by the elders was a common characteristic of the entire Indian society.

## EDUCATION OF YOUTH IN INDIA

Education was denied to youth belonging to certain strata and as such they had little opportunity for self-improvement. In consequence, socio-economic and occupational mobility was severely constricted. To the extent that education, particularly higher education, even today is a commodity which has to be bought, it is available largely to those who are able to pay for it and as such it is beyond the reach of the lower income groups (Desai). The percentage of non-student youth to student youth at all levels makes poignant reading. The prevailing system of stratification denies the possibility of education acting as a lever of mobility.

## NEARLY TO INDEPENDENCE OF INDIA

During the pre-independence period, there was considerable participation by youth in the national movement. The revolutionary movements for the overthrow of British rule in India were manned by youth. Impoverishment of the people and the rising nationalist consciousness, created and reinforced by modern education, generated resentment and resistance against the British. Some of the youth were drawn to trade unionism and other radical movements. A section of them felt that apart from dislodging the British, it was also necessary to demolish the system of stratification based on property. Marxian ideology found favour with the younger intellectuals and they were very keen to lead the struggle for the abolition of the inequities class system. Such movements met with stiff resistance on the part of the British and many young men and women languished in jails for years. There was a ferment among the youth in favour of new ideas, new institutional structures, and new patterns of thought. This is reflected in the literature produced during the 1920s, 1930s, and the early 1940s, besides the national and radical movements, there were few outlets for the energy and creativity of youth. A non-expanding economy and a restrictive social structure did not give freedom to the imagination, initiative, and creativity of the youth. As the nationalist movement was led by intellectuals and professionals, it attracted young men and women from the more affluent and educated sections of society. Those from the lower strata were drawn into it only when it acquired a mass character.

## YOUTH LATER TO INDEPENDENCE

At the outset the importance of the biological and socio-cultural dimensions of youth was emphasized. As a result of the increase in life expectation from thirty in the pre-independence period to fifty-five and above after 1960 and later, the youth were recognized as a force to contend with.

The distribution of youth population in rural and urban areas for 1951, 1961, and 1971 makes interesting reading. In 1951 the percentage of youth, i.e., those in the age group fifteen to twenty-four, was 16.86 (males 16.46 per cent and females 17.26 per cent) in the rural areas. For the same year, in the urban areas, the percentage of youth was 19.93 (males 20.07 per cent and females 19.76 per cent). In 1961, the percentage of youth in rural areas was 16.20 (males 15.62 per cent and females 16.81 per cent) and 18.84 (males 19.05 per cent and females 18.58 per cent) in urban areas. A decade later, in 1971, the percentage of youth in rural areas was 15.75 (males 15.57 per cent and females 15.93 per cent) and 19.61 (males 19.90 per cent and females 19.27 per cent) in urban areas. Thus, we find little evidence of change in the percentage of youth in urban and rural areas for the different census years quoted above. Of course, if we consider the age-group fifteen to twenty-nine the youth constitute a very sizeable proportion of the Indian population.

With respect to the urban areas, in 1961, 34.96 per cent of youth was uneducated, while educated youth constituted 14.14 per cent. Among these, 23.70 per cent were males and 48.62 per cent were females. Amongst the educated, males were 19.15 per cent while females were only 8.05 per cent. The term educated, in this context, includes matriculates and technical and non-technical diploma holders, as also those with higher education. In rural areas, for the same year, 71.44 per cent were uneducated (males 56.30 per cent and females 86.05 per cent). There were only 2.09 per cent educated youth (males 3.77 per cent and females 0.48 per cent). For the year 1971, in the urban areas, uneducated youth constituted 26.43 per cent (males 18.12 per cent and females 36.38 per cent), while educated youth

constituted 22.96 per cent (males 26.59 per cent and females 17.42 per cent). As for the rural areas, the uneducated were 60.62 per cent (males 45.24 per cent and females 76.38 per cent) and the educated were 5.45 per cent (males 8.8 per cent and females 2.2 per cent). Thus, we find that there has been a reduction in the percentage of the uneducated over the ten years. Naturally, all those who have received some education matriculation and above are bound to swell the number of persons who need employment, adding in its turn to the number of the educated unemployed in the country.

### **YOUTH STUDENT IN INDIA**

A great deal of attention has been given to the problems of youth by social scientists, both Indian and foreign. The importance attached to the study of youth in societies having a well-developed youth culture, and in those in which it is incipient, is understandable. It should be noted that certain authors, like Musgrave (1964), dispute the entire formulation about a clear-cut differentiation between the youth and the old generation and assert that the youth are not a distinctive group. However, the presence of a large number of adolescents and young adults has significant implications for the general stability of the social system in societies in which the majority of the population consists of adolescents and youth and in which the capacity to generate income is limited. This appears to be true of many Asian countries. The importance of educated youth is enhanced by the fact that they have been exposed to education and sensitized to new ideas and values. This gives them new visions and utopias. But they are not given necessary opportunities for the realization of their aspirations. This fact has implications for the politicization of youth. This is why student youth are attracted to political religions. It should be emphasized that even educated youth do not constitute a homogeneous group, for among them there are differences which stem from rural and urban backgrounds, family backgrounds, caste and class backgrounds, and so on. Many students undergoing higher education today come from families which have had hardly any background of higher education. This has implications for the choice of careers and courses and also for performance in colleges and universities. Several studies have brought home the relationship between socio-economic and cultural backgrounds and the performance of the students. With respect to wastage and stagnation in education this relationship is pronounced (Kamat and Deshmukh 1963:13). In a study of students from Poona university, it was found that about forty-six per cent of arts students completed their B.A course, but fifteen per cent left without passing the first year examination, sixteen per cent passed the first year examination but left without passing the intermediate examination, seven per cent joined the degree classes but left without passing, seven per cent passed the intermediate but left without joining the degree classes, and four per cent joined the degree classes but left without passing the final examination. Apart from the hard fact of wastage and stagnation reported above, the relationship between social stratification and wastage and stagnation is even more revealing. From the Poona study, it is clear that among advanced castes of Brahmans and Prabhus (CKP) the wastage is about forty-two per cent and for other castes and communities it is fifty-two per cent or above. Even if we exclude the backward classes, among whom wastage is the highest, it is as high as fifty-six per cent among the Marathas. It is further noted that among the higher grades (S.S.C.), wastage among local students is lower than among non-local students. Among the Brahmans and the CKP, wastage is less than thirty-five per cent, while among all other castes and communities it is as high as fifty per cent. Wastage and stagnation in professional courses has also been reported.

### **SITUATION OF YOUTH IN INDIA**

Our discussion of the situation and problems of youth (students as well as non-students) in the post-independence period highlights certain important points:

1. There is increasing awareness on the part of youth that it forms a distinctive group and it is conscious that it will be in its own interest to work for bringing about rapid social change and progress;
2. There is a general distrust of the prevailing institutional arrangements and a keen desire for changing the social order;

3. Non-student youth are handicapped with several difficulties such as lack of education, lack of any prospects of mobility, and dependence on kith and kin, caste and linguistic group;
4. Such youth are either not adequately exposed to new ideas and values, or in the event of their exposure to them through the mass media, it is not possible for them to act upon any of them;
5. Student youth, who have been exposed to new ideas and values, are keen to implement them although they are also beset with certain difficulties-financial dependence on parents, nature of the educational system, and lack of opportunities for occupations and career.
6. A section of the student youth is fired by radical ideology and is keen on restructuring the social order;
7. Due to a variety of factors, there is considerable student unrest and violence, but this unrest is only an extension of their frustration and helplessness which is capitalized on by political leaders;
8. Student violence can also be understood as an important medium of communication between students and the authorities; and
9. Restlessness among the youth is an indicator of the feeling on its part that the present order and institutional arrangements have failed to keep the promise which was given on the eve of independence.

### **VIEW OF AUTHORS' ABOUT INDIAN YOUTH**

**Shrotryia, Vijay & Singh, Shashank. (2020)** India, formerly dubbed the "golden bird," is home to a large percentage of the world's population. It housed some of the most prestigious academic institutions in the world and has a long history of cultural significance. Over the course of countless ages, invaders squandered the area's natural wealth for their own gain. At the time of its independence's collapse in 1947, it had one of the world's lowest economies. For today's youth, India's historical achievements, such as the country's wealth, the golden bird's prominence, and the holy intellectual ground it once held are relics with only textual worth. This research paper makes an effort to answer the following questions about India's economy: what was the state of the economy before and after independence; how did India go from having one of the world's poorest economies in 1947 to having the third-largest economy in the world today; and what is the current economic and non-economic status of India.

**Somasekhar, Dr. (2020)** To the lowest level entity, which may be a hamlet, economic growth filters down. Growth is instrumental, not final. Many shifts have occurred in rural regions as a result of economic development.

**Dev, Mahendra & Motkuri, Venkatanarayana. (2011)** The demographic "dividend" or "youth bulge," in which a larger proportion of the population is under the age of 25, may be a driving force behind India's economic development in the years to come. Although the youth employment rate has been falling as school and university enrollment has increased, the large number of young people in the labor force suggests that youth unemployment and underemployment will continue to be a major policy concern in India for the foreseeable future. In this light, this article analyzes the young labor market in India from 1983 to 2007-08, focusing on both employment and unemployment rates. The report examines a wide range of labor market indicators, including labor force and workforce participation rates, unemployment, joblessness, the working poor, growth and employment elasticities and more. In addition, the study suggests policy changes that may be made to help lower teenage unemployment and boost productive employment.

**Verdick (2009)** The primary goal of this article was to evaluate the effects of the recent financial crises on young men and women. He amassed evidence from a wide variety of nations, including Spain, Finland, Japan, Australia, Canada, the United States, and many more. This article examines the changing rates of youth unemployment in the five largest cities in five different countries: Spain, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Japan. He then analysed how these tendencies in joblessness changed before and after the financial crises.

The results showed that economic growth in these nations slowed during the 2008 financial crisis and took longer to recover than in previous recessions. That's why, according to the author, it took so long for these economies to get back on their feet after the 2008 financial crisis. The research also analysed how the financial crises of the 1990s affected Mexico and Turkey. Additionally, it was seen that young men were influenced more than young women. He speculated that the construction business, which employs a disproportionately large number of young people, would have been hit particularly hard.

**Biavaschi, et al. (2012)** Their core focus was on pinpointing the factors that influence the youth employment landscape. The study compared the state of affairs in the first world with those in third world countries.

This article set out to examine the impact of occupational education and training on young unemployment. They maintained that the vast differences in the structure and operation of vocational training and education across most global areas were a major factor in the varying young employment prospects. Concerning the state of affairs in India, they discovered that the job market was especially challenging for the country's young adults. They said this was because Indian culture places a higher value on college education than on practical skills. For the reason that it lacked the sophistication to compete in the high-tech market. As a result, they hypothesised that formal occupational education and training was crucial to their success in finding and maintaining employment.

**Thorat and Senapati (2014)** Have studied the employment and unemployment rates in India across all socioeconomic categories. The purpose of this report was to evaluate the job market for people from historically underrepresented groups. A number of NSSO reports have been used. Both in rural and urban settings, the percentage of SC men working was lower than that of other groups. As a group, SC women have a lower employment rate than non-SC/ST women, but their percentage of the total female workforce is larger. With the exception of a few states, the disparity between SC and Non SC populations in rural Punjab was very large. However, in terms of unemployment, it was discovered that SC males and females had a relatively higher proportion of the total unemployment in the case of rural areas, and that the same pattern was seen in terms of urban areas. On the other hand, STs were found to have an unemployment rate that was similar to that of non-SC/STs across all regions.

**Axelrad, et al. (2018)** Joblessness among the young and the elderly (those 25 and up) and those aged 45 and above have both been studied (15-24 years). Using data from the Israeli labour market and the OECD, they conducted an empirical analysis of the article. A lot of people, they said, misread the unemployment rates of young people and the elderly. They said the shift in the business cycle or in government policy was the key reason for the increase in youth unemployment. However, the elderly population's unemployment was solely a result of their age. As a result, the authors advocated for distinct strategies and programmes to tackle the youth and senior unemployment rates.

**Anga'Wandisa Ndzwayiba (2020)** In developing countries like South Africa, where the population is young and rapidly expanding, youth unemployment is a serious problem. We will further evaluate the problem of young unemployment in South Africa by considering the related literature, with an emphasis on scholarly journal articles, in an effort to identify and describe all of the contributing elements. The term "labour force" is used to describe the segment of the population that is both able and willing to work. People who aren't actively seeking employment aren't counted in the labour force. This may be a stay-at-home parent, a full-time student, or a discouraged worker who gave up looking for work because they felt there was no opportunity.

## **SIZE OF THE YOUTH POPULATION**

In order to understand the situation of young people in India, it is important to understand the rapid demographic changes that produced the historically unprecedented numbers of young people. These demographic changes potentially have important implications on the labor market opportunities, access to public resources, and access to family resources for youth.

The size of the youth population (15 to 24 age group) has increased three fold during last four decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It increased from 73.22 million in 1961 to 195.07 million 2001. The projected estimations (RGI) indicate a further increase in the size of the youth population to 222.1 million in 2006 and to 239.77 million in 2011. The size of the youth population in India would be larger than the total population of many countries in the world.

The share of youth population in the total population in India increased from 16.7 per cent in 1961 to 20 per cent in 2001 and the projections show that it would further increase to 20.1 per cent by 2011. Both the size and share of youth population is increasing in India and it is a clear indication of bulging youth population in the country.

**Table: Size of the Youth Population in India, 1961-2001**

Year	Population (in Millions)				% of Urban		Growth		Sex Ratio		% of Youth in T P
	15 -19	20-24	15-24	All Ages	Youth	All	Youth	All	Youth	All	
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>
1961	35.88	37.33	73.22	438.9	20.3		-	1.95	990	941	16.7
1971	47.47	43.10	90.57	548.2	23.6	20.2	2.15	2.20	935	930	16.5
1981	65.97	59.01	124.98	665.3	26.7	24.3	3.27	2.22	930	934	18.2
1991	79.04	74.48	153.52	838.6	28.3	25.7	2.08	2.14	925	927	18.3
2001	104.04	91.03	195.07	1028.61	-	27.8	2.42	1.93	907	933	19.0
2006*	119.05	103.05	222.10	1112.19	-	28.9	2.63	1.57	892	932	20.0
2011*	121.73	118.04	239.77	1192.50	-	30.0	1.54	1.40	907	932	20.1

**Notes:** 1. Figures for 1981 exclude Assam whereas those for 1991 exclude Jammu and Kashmir; 2. \* Projected (RGI) figures; 3. Youth is between 15 to 24 years age group; 4. Growth is Population growth rate – Compound annual (CAGR); 5. T P – Total Population.

**Source:** Visaria (1998); Census of India; Registrar General of India (RGI).

### HUMAN CAPITAL OF THE YOUTH: LITERACY AND EDUCATIONAL LEVELS

Development economics now lays great importance on the concept of human capital. Education, defined in terms of literacy rate and schooling levels (enrolment ratios - in primary and secondary schools - mean years of schooling), is an important component of human capital. These indicators proximately represent the level of human capital in society.

Around 32.7 per cent of the 7 years and above age population in India found to be illiterates in 2004-05. The literacy rate for all (7 + age) population has increased from 47.8 percent in 1983 to 67.3 per cent in 2004-05, 19.5 percentage points increase during this two decade. While the adult literacy rate has shown 18.4 percentage points increase from 43.4 to 61.8 per cent, the youth literacy rate has shown 23.8 percentage points increase from 56.4 to 80.3 per cent during this period (Table 4.5). The youth literacy rate has always been higher than all (7+ age) and adult (15 + age) literacy rate. Moreover the rate of increase in terms of literacy rate during last two and half decades is higher among the youth when compared to all or adult population.

**Table: Literacy Rate and Educational Levels of Youth Population in India**

Age Group	Literacy	Formal Schooling						
		None	Below Primary	Primary	Middle	Secondary	Post-Secondary	
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>		
<b>1983</b>								
All Population	(7 + age)	47.8	54.2	14.6	14.1	9.2	6.1	1.8
Adult Population	(15 + age)	43.4	58.7	7.9	12.3	10.6	8.1	2.4
Youth population	(15-24 age)	56.4	44.9	7.6	15.6	17.6	12.4	1.9
<b>1993-94</b>								
All Population	(7 + age)	57.4	43.8	17.4	13.9	11.6	10.2	3.1
Adult Population	(15 + age)	52.1	49.1	9.8	11.4	12.7	13	4.0

Youth population	(15-24 age)	67.8	33.1	8.5	13.5	20.8	21.4	2.7
<b>2004-05</b>								
All Population	(7 + age)	67.3	35.1	15.9	16.3	14.7	13.6	4.4
Adult Population	(15 + age)	61.8	40.5	7.7	12.8	16	17.3	5.7
Youth population	(15-24 age)	80.3	21.4	7.1	15.2	25.4	27.0	3.9
<b>2007-08</b>								
All Population	(7 + age)	70.8	30.2	1.0	16.3	17.2	16.0	5.8
Adult Population	(15 + age)	65.5	35.5	1.0	8.1	13.6	17.3	7.3
Youth population	(15-24 age)	85.4	15.2	0.6	6.6	15.4	26.7	5.8

**Note:** 1. Figures presented above are in percentages; 2. Secondary includes higher secondary below graduation; 3. Rural-urban and male-female combined.

**Source:** Computed using NSS Employment and Unemployment Survey unit record data.

The educational level among all age group population in general and among youth in particular has been increasing over time (see Table 3.2). The youth who had secondary and above education levels was about one-third of their population. One can notice from Table 4.5 that the percentage of youth population with lower levels of education (below middle) was declining during last two and half decades and those completed middle and other higher levels of education was increasing. It indirectly indicates that the dropout in the elementary education cycle has been declining.

**Table: Percentage of Youth (15-24) Attending Educational Institutions in India**

Year	Rural and Urban			Rural			Urban		
	Persons	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
1983	17.4	24.9	9.7	13.4	21.1	5.6	28.4	34.6	21.4
1993-94	24.1	31.2	16.4	19.5	27.5	11.0	36.5	40.8	31.5
2004-05	29.1	34.2	23.5	25.0	31.0	18.7	39.4	41.9	36.6
2007-08	32.8	37.3	28.0	29.0	34.7	22.9	42.2	43.6	40.6

**Note:** 1. Youth refers 15 to 24 years age group population; 2. Usual status.

**Source:** National Sample Survey

The educational aspirations of the youth seem to be increasing over a period of time. About one-third of the youth population in India is attending educational institutions during 2007-8. It has increased from 17.4 per cent of their population in 1983 to 24.1% in 1993-94 and to 29.1% in 2004-05 and further to 32.8% in 2007-08 (see Table 4.6). The attendance rates are higher among the male and urban youth when compared to their female and rural counterparts respectively.

The improvement in attendance rate during the period between 1983 and 2007-08 is highest among the female youth especially urban female youth followed by rural female youth. The rate of increase in attendance rate was sharp and higher between 1983 and 1993-94 (the increase was about 6.7 percentage points) but that momentum has slowed down between 1993-94 and 2004-05 (5 percentage points). This slow down was more so among the male youth population and youth of urban locality. But the rate of increase was higher during nineties (i.e. between 1993-94 and 2004-05) than that of the eighties (i.e. between 1983 and 1993-94), for the female youth especially for those living in rural areas. The very low level of attendance rate in the initial point of time among the young females could have been partly responsible for the sharp increase. As a result both the gender (male-female) and locational (rural-urban) differences in attendance rate declined sharply between 1983 and 2007-08.

## YOUTH LABOUR MARKET IN INDIA

One of the most obvious economic implications of changes in the absolute and relative numbers of young people is in the youth labor market. The way in which the increasing youth population is absorbed into or adjusted in the labour market is a matter of concern.

### WORK PARTICIPATION RATE

As on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2005 the estimated total population (all Ages) is around 1092.94 million. The NSS 61st round estimates shows that the share of youth (15-24) in the total population is around 18.6 per cent and size of the youth population is 203.63 million. But the information based on the Registrar General of India's (RGI) population projections one would project the youth population at 215.5 million as on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2005 and it would be around 19.8 per cent of the total population of India.

The labour force participation (LFPR) and work participation rates (WPR) based on usual status among the youth population (15-24 age) in India were around 50 and 46 per cents respectively in 2004-05. Thus the size of the youth labour force i.e. the persons available for the labour market was 107.3 million and the size of the work force i.e. persons working or employed in one or other kind economic activity was 98.7 millions. The difference between labour-force and workforce indicates the unemployed (i.e. those who are willing to work and available for the labour market but could not find employment or work) which was about 8.6 million young persons (15-24) in 2004-05.

In the total unemployed (all age groups) estimated at 13.4 million in 2004-05, the share of youth (15-24 age) was around 64.1 per cent. In other words the lion's share of the unemployed persons in India was the contribution of unemployed persons in youth age cohorts.

The work participation rate among the youth (15-24 age) found to be higher than the overall WPR (all ages) but it has been lower than the WPR of all adult (15 + age) and senior adults (25 + age). This pattern has been observed in last two decades across locations (rural-urban) and gender (male-female). The work participation rate among the youth during the last two decades indicates that it has been declining (see Table 4.7). It declined 9 percentage points from 55.5 per cent in 1983 to 46.0 per cent in 2004-05. The decline in WPR during this period was sharper among the male youth (11.4 percentage points) in general and rural male youth (12.4 percentage points) in particular and the decline in WPR of female youth was very minimal. The WPR of urban female youth remained almost constant between 1983 and 2004-5. The decline in WPR was higher among the rural youth when compared to their urban counterparts.

**Table: Work Participation Rate (WPR) of Youth in India**

Age Groups	Rural and Urban			Rural			Urban		
	Persons	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>1983</b>									
Youth (15-24 age)	55.5	62	37.8	71.0	76.8	56.2	39.3	47	16.8
Adult25 (25 + age)	69.1	72.4	58.9	91.5	92.3	89.4	46.2	52.5	25.3
Adult15 (15 + age)	65	69.3	52	85.3	87.7	78.5	44.1	50.9	22.5
<b>1993-94</b>									
Youth (15-24 age)	50.1	64.7	34.1	56.1	70.2	41.0	33.8	50.3	15.1
Adult25 (25 + age)	68.9	72.5	58.4	92.1	93.2	88.8	45.1	51.7	25.4
Adult15 (15 + age)	63.4	83.8	42	67.8	86.4	48.7	50.9	76.8	22.3
<b>2004-05</b>									
Youth (15-24 age)	46.0	60.1	30.7	50.6	64.4	36.0	34.2	49.7	16.1
Adult25 (25 + age)	68.1	90.6	45.4	72.3	92.0	52.8	56.8	86.9	25.0
Adult15 (15 + age)	61.9	81.8	41.4	66.2	84.1	48.2	50.3	75.8	22.6
<b>2007-08</b>									
Youth (15-24 age)	41.0	56.8	23.8	45.0	60.4	28.3	31.2	48.1	12.5
Adult25 (25 + age)	65.5	91.0	39.9	69.6	92.5	47.1	54.9	87.3	20.8
Adult15 (15 + age)	58.7	81.3	35.6	62.9	83.5	42.2	48.2	76.1	18.5

**Note:** 1. Figure presented are in percentage; 2. Usual status including principal and subsidiary status; 3.

Adult25 – Adults of 25 years and above age, Adult15 – Adults of 15 years and above age.

**Source:** Computed using NSS Employment and Unemployment Survey unit record data.

Increase in attendance rate alone may not explain for the decline in WPR. Particularly, the highest improvement in the attendance rate during the period between 1983 and 2004-05 was among female youth but there was not corresponding sharp decline in WPR of female youth in this period. Therefore one may have to search the reasons elsewhere.

#### *Employability*

The concept of employability is gaining momentum in the labour market literature. It indicates the person's capability of gaining initial employment, maintaining employment and moving to new employment by choice. It depends on the knowledge, skills and attitudes possessed by the individual, and also the labour market information (Weinert *et al* 2001). There is a changing policy agenda related to labour market from the "job protection" to "security through employability". The policy agenda needs to equip the job-seekers with skills that match the demand in the market. It is definitely a challenge in the context of increasing pace of globalization and technological change, both of which increase the job insecurity and job displacement where the unskilled are getting excluded from the labour market. Skill formation involves schooling, professional or technical education, and vocational training.

#### **SUMMARY AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

A summary of the trends in youth labour market is given below.

- Labour force and work participation rates have fluctuated between 40 to 44 per cent during the last three and half decades. The share of youth outside labour force increased.
- The size of the youth population (15 to 24 age group) has increased three folds in the last four decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The projected population in 2011 is around 240 million youth population in the country.
- The literacy rate for youth population rose from 56.4% in 1983 to 80.3% in 2007-08. The percentage of youth attending educational institutions increased from 17.4% to 32.8% during the same period. Regarding employability, only 4.9% of young workers had post-secondary level of education in 2007-08.
- The self employed form the majority of youth workers (50%). Casual labourers form the next highest category among youth workers (35%). The share of youth regular salaried/wage employment increased over time.
- However, the share of agriculture in youth employment declined faster than adults. It was 54.4% for youth and 57% for adults in 2007-08. It is interesting to note the share of industrial sector increased faster for youth as compared to services. Unlike for adults, the share of industry for youth is higher than services in the year 2004-05.
- India has 459 million workers in 2004-05. Out of this, 423 million (92%) are unorganized workers. Most of the youth are also in the unorganized sector.

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