

# National Youth Policy, 2014: Implementation, Performance and Setbacks

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## Abstract

Youth comprises the most valuable and productive section in a population of a nation, and the development of a nation determines the development of a nation. Thus, it is required to formulate and implement policies dedicated towards the growth and development of the youth, build their capabilities, impart skills and training to the youth and prepare a strong base of human resource for the nation to progress. According to the Census 2011, the Youth in India comprises about 34.8% of the total population, and this demographic dividend makes it a young nation and also provides advantages of reaping this vast talent pool for economic growth. The paper highlights the National Youth Policy of India implemented in 2014. It describes youth, importance and various schemes for the youth in India, its vision, objectives and future imperatives. It also discusses the enactment of the youth policy until 2020, impact analysis of the policy and setbacks. It is a review paper and attempts to analyse whether the National Youth Policy, 2014 has been able to achieve its goal of empowering Youth of India and achieve a global position in all spheres by harnessing their capabilities. The paper concludes that the most critical factor today is to create a happy and stress-free environment for the youth so that they get a chance to develop to the fullest. The National Youth Policy fails to understand this aspect of happiness. Happiness Index is developed, and its vitality is internationally recognised, so the policy-makers must look into this dimension to strengthen and empower the youth while implementing this policy with a good spirit.

**Keywords:** National youth policy; Empowerment; Human resource; Youth priority areas; Happiness.

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## Introduction

Individual human actions have always been a reflection of what values does a society delivers. Youth is an integral part of any society or nation to focus upon. Various countries worldwide have adopted distinguishing and multi-dimensional youth policies to provide the youth in respective nations a direction towards patriotism, recognising

the capabilities and interests through democratic participation and engagement in political, socio-cultural, economic and environmental development. A youth policy does not just push for GDP contribution but also looks forward to promoting innovations, aspirations and philanthropy or volunteering through international or global connections.

The European Commission and Council of Europe (EU-CoE) have defined a youth policy as a medium to create a home for young people within a community of values by supporting democracy, sustainability, social cohesion, social and economic development. Youth policy gives a view of the policy-makers about the youth in their country. The way a society treats its young people decides affects their present and future development. So a youth

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policy is a question of values and vision of society. In simple words, youth policy is a government-led plan aimed at assisting young people in achieving successful social integration and active citizenship. Youth policies are sometimes governed nationally or region-wise (Council of Europe, 2015). India going to become a country with a vast young population is a positive bunch of happiness and an opportunity to maintain recognition in the community of nations, which is a great responsibility in itself.

### *National Youth Policy, 2014*

During the period of the Congress-led government in India, the 11th and 12th Five Year Plans were structured for an increased expenditure for youth development. The majority ruling India after its ten-year-long duration of a rule, though unsuccessful to provide employment and livelihood security opportunities for the youth, came up with policy concerning development of youth known as the National Youth Policy-2014. This new National Youth Policy brings out various changes and unique areas to be covered which were not being addressed by the previous policy, i.e. National Youth Policy-2003 such as political participation and engagement of youth, social entrepreneurship etc.

The policy defines youth as persons between the age group of 15-29 years giving a figure that the young population comprises 27.5% of the total population and contribute around 34% per cent share in India's gross national income (NYP, 2014). Through the policy, the government has tried to compare the demographic transition in India with the demographic transition that led to a spectacular rise in East Asian Tigers' GDP in the second half of the twentieth century. The youth policy envisages an all-inclusive vision for the youth of India which is "to empower the youth of the country to achieve their full potential, and through them enable India to find its rightful place in the community of nations" (NYP, 2014). For achieving this vision, five key objectives requiring specific action in one or more of 11 priority areas were to be looked upon.

The policy suggests differentiating the roles and functions of all the stakeholders involved, from the civil society sector, employment firms, government bodies etc. Use of various tools is being suggested to engage the public, especially youth to promote development through sharing of activities, events and policy information conducted by the government and other institutions, through social media and among existing youth development organisations. For monitoring and evaluation of

the success of NYP-2014, a baseline assessment must be undertaken across the set of identified indicators. The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MoYAS) was directed to publish a biennial report entailing the status of NYP-2014 publishing all the achievements, failures and future challenges. The report was directed to aware youth of the nation on the state policies and initiatives for the progress of the youth (NYP, 2014).

### *Background*

The first National Youth Policy in India was being formulated in 1988 giving way forward to the constitution of National Youth Council which was later decided to be renamed as the 'Committee for National Youth Programmes (CONYP)' to facilitate various platforms for youth such as to seek and receive information, Nation Building activities, sports activities etc. Universal Adult Franchise gave every young individual above 18 years of age a right to vote.

There were schemes such as Ananth Bharathi to promote cultural interchange and national integration, skill-building, Mass Programme for Functional Literacy (MPFL), self-employment training programme including training of agricultural, poultry farming, rearing etc., Leadership Training Programme, Social Service Activities mostly carried out through National Service Scheme (NSS) and National Cadet Corps (NCC), mass participation in sports, yoga and cultural activities (Shodhganga).

During 1997, the policy got revised with not many changes in it but included more finances for youth activities and development specifically in the education and employment sector. In 2003, the policy was being re-revised under Vajpayee's term. Congress Government introduced a new National Youth Policy-2014 with higher objectives of political participation and engagement of youth and directly into governance and leadership.

### *Scope of National Youth Policies in India*

The scope of youth policies in India can include the schemes for a wide variety of issues in broader perspectives. Looking from the political aspect of youth policy, under the Indian National Congress (INC) Party and Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) led governments have been benefitted by the schemes formulated for the development of youth. During the period of Congress-led government, from 2004 to 2014 there was unrest noted between the public due to failed economic policies and unemployment due to lack of skilled labour. With the proposed

new National Youth Policy in 2014, Congress Government tried to get proper recognition from the citizens of the country before general elections 2014 and to attract the youth with promising objectives of the new policy.

The Union Cabinet approved the introduced National Youth Policy, 2014 on 9th January 2014 which had to replace National Youth Policy, 2003. From 7th April 2014 to 12th May 2014, the 16th Lok Sabha Elections 2014 held and BJP rose with the majority of 282 seats in the house. The Anna Hazare Movement started in 2011 against corruption and demand for Jan Lokpal Bill to be enacted the support of many young citizens of India. This movement led to a formation and success of fresh born, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in Delhi. The Government of India has been trying to direct the actions of the youth towards innovation and to make them perform as a demographic dividend for the economy. The houses of Parliament turning out to include free thinkers, people initiating overall development, innovators, entrepreneurs, doctors, labourers etc. and more voices started coming from young leaders and activists working at the grass-root level.

The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MoYAS), has always come up with programmes providing new opportunities for youth to participate in sports and representing the country in Commonwealth Games, Olympics, Asian games etc. such schemes and programmes include the development of infrastructure for sport. Inculcating physical education sports and nutrition as a subject or course in CBSE and for higher education in universities so that youngsters can choose sports and nutrition as a profession was again an engaging step. Urban Sports Infrastructure Scheme, Rajiv Gandhi Khel Abhiyaan (RGKA), Scheme for Identification and Nurturing of Sporting Talent in the Country (INSTAL)- operating sports schools at District level etc. (PIB, 2015) have been the major highlights of the schemes provided by the government to promote sports and physical education among youngsters.

Active and innovative young generations have always strengthened the foundations of an economy. Highly skilled software engineer, as well as a potter, has a defined contribution to the economy. Most of the young population works at the MSMEs with less entitlement of what they must get to fulfil their and their family's essential requirement of food, clothing and shelter, additionally health and education. A poor youth can contribute towards the economy only when his and his basic needs

are fulfilled. The Ministry of Education (formerly MHRD) has promoted women empowerment and youth development considering the right to work with one's choice which is introduced in Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in Article 23 (1) and Article 6 respectively and the state shall safeguard this right to the citizens (OHCHR, 1948) (OHCHR, 1976).

A young mind must be guided in such a way that it stores and renew the cultural, social and moral values time to time so that it can cater the knowledge and values to others. Society has a significant role in shaping young minds. Engagement with peer groups, international co-operations and socialising is essential to learn things and concepts from different perspectives. The youth policies shall look forward to the inclusion of the minorities such as young women, youth from LGBTQ community and backward communities, tribal children, children and youth facing criminal charges or indulged in illegal activities (including children of criminals, sex workers, affected by atrocities, rape victims, etc.), children and youngsters from low-income families etc.

This youth policy must provide rehabilitation and counselling facilities and must deal with a broader perspective of bringing justice and equity. Looking forward to the Sustainable Development Goals, youth policies must encourage the young generation to conserve biospheres and wildlife and promote sustainable development.

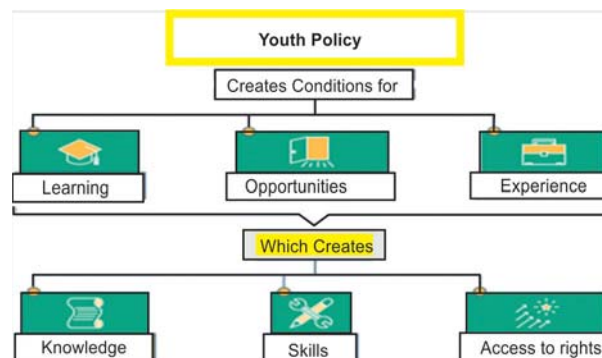


Fig. 1: Youth Policy implications.

Source: (EU-CoE, 2018) Insights into youth policy governance

### Youth and related schemes in India

India has actively overcome the challenges that occurred in the past 70 years since independence but social ills such as poverty, gender inequality, racism, caste system etc. have always lacked us to grow. To provide freedom and opportunities to all the youngsters of the nation so that they can build their future and succeed in their lives.

Government of India has come up with revised and renewed youth policies that provided various definitions of youth and a good number of schemes specifically for the advancement of youth.

### *Definition and importance of Youth*

The concept of youth does not have a fixed definition specifying an age group, universally adopted. Different countries define youth in different age groups according to their respective policies for youth. A person who attains the age where he/she discontinues education or completed compulsory education, and finds first work (occupation) is referred to as a youth (NYP, 2014). United Nations defines 'youth' as any person who lies in the age between 15 and 24 years. The National Youth Policy, 2003 defined youth as a person aged between 13-35 years but in the ongoing policy recognises youth as a person aged between 15-29 years.

Youth is a key to international peace and brotherhood other than just a part of the demographic dividend of any economy or region. As per the current policy document, 27.5% of the population is the youth from the age group 15-29 years. Research suggests that following United States, China and Japan, India will become the 4th largest economy by 2025 by contributing 5.5%-6% to the world GDP (NYP, 2014). This is just one aspect of the importance of youth. Youth has always proved to be promoters of change before and since independence as well as in the modern world where governments have tried to bind them in limitations leaving them unsatisfied. Dissatisfied youth have been a cause for destruction. Not only the GDP but happiness must also grow.

### *Investment by Government on various programmes*

Around Rs. 37,000 crore are spent on schemes oriented towards the growth and advancement of youth in diverse areas ranging from education to health and skill development. About Rs. 55,000 crores are spent on non-targeted projects designed for various segments of the population and of which youth are not the direct/main beneficiaries (Ministry of Finance, 2012).

More than 80% of the targeted spending of the funds are assigned for education through Ministry of Education (MoE) and Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE) such as Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA). Grants and scholarships, direct cash benefits for both secondary and higher level of education are dealt with this targeted expenditure.

The non-targeted expenditure included food subsidies, employment guarantee programmes like MGNREGA, building health infrastructure like AIIMS facility centres and hospitals throughout the country, disease control, both communicable and non-communicable diseases. Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana was launched is one of the insurance schemes launched in 2000 through the Ministry of Labour and Employment. On 12 April 2005, the government inaugurated the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) with an objective to provide accessible, affordable and quality health care to the rural, the marginalised and the vulnerable groups (NHRM, 2005).

Family welfare schemes also constitute a significant share and other ministries with programmes are Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) and Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) (NYP, 2014). Per capita spending totalled was Rs. 2710 of which Rs. 1,100 is targeted spending (Ministry of Finance, 2012) (NYP, 2014). State Governments also invest a considerable share of total expenditure on youth services, health and education (NYP, 2014).

### *Schemes for Youth engagement and participation in Politics*

National Service Scheme (NSS, n.d.) was launched in 1969 and the National Cadet Corps (NCC) in 1948, are the two most active initiatives ever conducted in India. Over the years, the participation of youth in NSS has tremendously increased from 40,000 to 3.8 million in March 2018. The students from various colleges, universities and higher education institutions are voluntarily engaging in community service programmes. National Youth Parliament Festival, Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS), National Programme for Youth and Adolescent Development are also there for political participation and engagement of students across India (MoYAS, 2020) (NSS, 2019).

### *Need for NYP, 2014*

The policies formulated for Youth in India have addressed concerns from the ground to the top level. However, implementation has always been given less weightage. Youth policies right from 1988 to 2014 were promising in a way as these have provided the capabilities of youngsters an exposure in various dimensions. NYP, 2014 has proposed a holistic vision that covers a few more important key areas to be looked upon for the overall development of the country through channelisation of youth's

energy in national building and economic growth. This new policy promises to bring opportunities for more attention to social justice and inclusion of youth belonging to minorities, tribal community by formulation new legislation and updating the existing. It is thus, necessary to revise the policies for more flexibility. Social entrepreneurship has been initiated through NYP, 2014. Co-ordination with other stakeholders such as non-governmental organisations and international organisations have been discussed. There will be separate monitoring and evaluation with the help of specific indicators.

**Focus on the Promises**

The new National Youth Policy-2014 identifies a vision comprising of 5 key objectives differentiated into 11 priority areas determined by the indicators to evaluate the accomplishments within these specified priority areas. Let us now analyse the vision of this policy as described in the diagram 1 given below (NYP, 2014).



Fig. 2: Vision, Objectives and Priority Areas in NYP, 2014.

Table 1: Focus Areas and future objectives of NYP, 2014.

Objectives	Priority Areas	Future Imperatives
1. Create a productive workforce that can make a sustainable contribution to India's economic development.	Education	Build System capacity and quality Promote skill development and lifelong learning
	Employment and Skill Development	Targeted youth outreach and awareness Build linkages across system and stakeholders Define the role of government vis-à-vis other stakeholders
	Entrepreneurship	Targeted youth programmes Scale-up programmes to build capacity Create programmes for youth entrepreneurs Implement widespread monitoring and evaluation systems
2. Develop a strong and healthy generation equipped to take on future challenges.	Health and Healthy Lifestyle	Improve Service Delivery Awareness about health, nutrition and preventive care Targeted disease control programme for youth
	Sports	Increase access to sports facilities and training Promotion of youth culture among youth Support and develop talented sportspersons
3. Instil social values and promote community service to build national ownership.	Promotion of Social Values	Formalise value education system Strengthen engagement for youth Support NGOs and for-profit organisations promoting values and harmony in society
	Community engagement	Leverage existing community development organisations Promote social entrepreneurship
4. Facilitate participation and civic engagement at all levels of governance.	Participation in politics and governance	Engage youth outside of political system Create governance mechanism that youth can leverage Promote youth engagement in urban governance
	Youth engagement	Measure and monitor effectiveness of youth development schemes Create a platform for engagement with youth
5. Support youth at risk and create equitable opportunity for all disadvantaged & marginalised youth.	Inclusion	Enabling and capacity-building of disadvantaged youth Ensuring opportunities for youth in conflict affected areas Develop a multi-pronged strategy for youth with disability Create awareness and opportunities for youth at risk
	Social Justice	Leveraging youth to eliminate unjust social practices Strengthen access to justice at all levels

### Future Imperatives under each Priority Area

The following table shows the objectives with the respective priority areas and future imperatives enlisted in the policy document, National Youth Policy, 2014. These future objectives under the priority areas have to be achieved with the help of activities, evaluation of which meant to be conducted through a set of indicators helping to construct a report for the projection of achievements and to ensure accountability.

### Course of Enactment till 2020

The governments change time to time; however, the policies must always be renewed and revised for better implementation and outcomes, i.e., flexible and dynamic. Coming towards the 21st century technological era, the policies through digital medium have reached almost every corner in India. Since 2014, through e-governance platforms and social media platforms, government policies for youth have reached out in the form of hashtags (#), online applications, e-surveys etc. making it easier to access any information and approach any government institution.

Start-up India, Skill India, Digital India etc. have provided new opportunities in employment to the youth to come forward and present their skills.

Other programmes like Khelo India, and Fit India Movement, as well as Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, have led to maximum youth participation at large. The government spending has spent in Secretariat – Social Service, Rashtriya Yuva Sashaktikaran Karyakram (RYSK), National Service Scheme (NSS), Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development (RGNID), Development in Sports Institutions, Encouragement and Awards to Sportsperson, Khelo India: National Programme for Development of Sports, approximately Rs. 2002.72 crores during the financial year 2018-2019 through the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (Department of Youth Affairs, 2019). The figure below shows the other expenditures on fundamental infrastructural developments for youth.

**Note:** Samagra Shiksha subsumes three existing schemes, namely: (i) Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, (ii) Rashtriya Madhyamik shiksha Abhiyan, and (iii) Teacher Education. The category 'others' includes other schemes and programmes under the Ministry which have an allocation of less than 5% of the total expenditure.

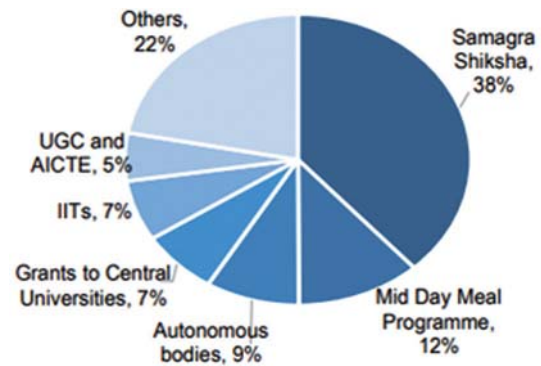


Fig. 3: Expenditure on fundamental infrastructural developments for youth. (Source: Expenditure Budget, Vol. 2, MHRD, 2019- 20; PRS).

### Impact of NYP, 2014

There are two indicators on which the impact or success of a policy can be mapped, i.e., leading and lagging indicators. Leading indicators are process-based and measure short-run implications of the policy; being an early sign showing whether the policy is leading on track or not. These indicators help to know that the policy has made frameworks or guidelines to conduct the purposes. Whereas, the lagging indicators measure the long-term impact of the policy. Leading indicators include states that have created a youth a youth policy, referencing NYP- 2014 in government (centre and state), media, civil society or private sector's reports and policy documents.

The lagging indicators include all the five areas covered under the NYP- 2014 for youth development. It consists of the creation of a productive workforce, developing a healthy and robust future, instilling social values and promoting community service, promoting participation and civic engagement and finally, ensuring inclusion and social justice.

Youth Development Index can be developed, comprising all these indicators together to show annual success and failures. The India Global YDI score is 0.548, which places it in the medium performing category and indicate towards the need for youth-oriented policy formulation and implementation. In 2017, the overall YDI score of India was 0.569 and in parity with the Global YDI score. The scores are indicative of fallout in the policy, continuous gender disparity across the various spheres in youth advancement despite the various policies at the central and state level with the target of mainstreaming of women (RGNID, 2017). The biennial 'Status of the Youth' report published by the MoYAS publish in every two years. Accordingly, the report was published

in 2017 based on the indices. The state has a greater obligation to help youngsters reach their full potential, expand fair access and broaden opportunities for them to advance. A greater focus should be placed on providing quality education practices like curricula, educational processes, and learning assessment, among other things.

Make in India, Digital India, and the Skill India Mission's core programs aimed at fresh skilling, up-skilling, and re-skilling should be redesigned and scaled up using ICT and through partnerships with approved universities, with a special emphasis on dropouts in tribal, rural, and remote areas. Despite the impressive progress made in Human Development on several fronts, the developmental outcomes have been non-universal and imbalanced. The deprivations in access, geographic inequalities and broadening gap in competencies have become vital issues for youth advancement.

It encompasses a social and political obligation to recognise and break the deep-rooted impediments that marginalise specific segments of youth. Building human capital requires a two way approach, blending expansion in opportunities and access and developing the capabilities of individuals. Youth will not be able to achieve their optimum capabilities unless they become vigorous citizens and development partners. Their active civic and political participation should be supported by an enabling environment. To reach out to the youth across the country, a variety of platforms such as e-discussions, youth parliament, online youth competitions and events, youth exchange programmes, virtual debates, career counselling and guidance, webinars and so on can be employed.

### *Review*

The NYP, 2014 had to be reviewed after the period of every five years. Thus in 2016, through a discussion in the Lok Sabha on a proposal to organise a National Youth Advisory Council under the chairmanship of Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports (MoYAS). The committee recommended that the membership of the Council shall comprise of both official and non-official members. Regarding the functions of the council, it suggested that the functions shall include review of implementation of youth-oriented policies and programmes and suggest the concerned ministries/departments for more effective implementation; monitoring the execution of the Action Plan of the National Youth Policy; and recommend the concerned ministries/departments on adopting new policies

and programmes for growth and advancement of the youth in the nation (Business Standard, 2016).

### *Setbacks*

Major setbacks were the finances to carry out skill development programmes. Rs 2,710 per capita can be measured as very low for an individual to survive in the 21st century getting to access every primary facility within this invested amount. The Result Framework Documents has to be maintained to keep a track record of youth participation and engagement in the programmes. Where the participation seems low, then the government has to work on that specific area. Development of Youth Connect Programme has been seen lately through digital platforms. Still, all are not able to connect through government webinars, seminars, events etc. because of lack of digital literacy and absence of technology. The private sector, as well as the public sector, needs to build more platforms for training and employment through skill development opportunities. Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have experienced a growth in youth volunteering and philanthropy as well as activism.

### *Draft National Youth Policy, 2021*

The Drafted National Youth Policy, 2021 is an ambitious document aiming to unlock potential of India's youth in a decade, that is, by 2031. The draft policy focuses on five key areas for achieving this objective and include- education, employment & entrepreneurship, youth leadership & development, health, fitness & sports and social justice. The first priority area education includes, making education system pertinent and relevant for the youth, support youth who are not engaged in education, employment or training and developing an integrated, cohesive system for marginalized and disadvantaged youth.

The second priority area employment and entrepreneurship includes, rejuvenating rural economy and retaining youth, devising region employment strategies for urban and semi-urban areas, promote entrepreneurship among youth, support informal economy, provide social security and cross-cutting programme for a wholesome employment. In the third priority area youth leadership and development, objective of strengthening youth volunteering, investment in youth leadership development programmes, develop a one-stop youth platform and developing leadership in marginalized youth have been spelt out.

The fourth focal area health, include promoting preventive healthcare and wellbeing (physical, mental and emotion), strengthening treatment and access, monitoring youth health statistics and harness data and technology in healthcare and ensure that marginalized youth are able to secure quality healthcare. In the fifth priority area fitness and sports, ample focus is placed on building a culture of sports and fitness among the youth in the country, overall development of sportsperson, inclusion of marginalized youth in sports. In the last priority area that is social justice, a huge amount of emphasis is given to empower and safeguard the youth, ensure fast justice delivery and juvenile rehabilitation and ensure social justice for marginalized and vulnerable youth. Besides, the draft policy also suggests to make huge investment in the youth policies to unravel India's large, valuable and potential resource base for achieving goals of sustainable development. The draft policy is only slightly different from the NYP, 2014 however, its rigorous implementation can ensure benefits for the entire nation.

## Conclusion

The happiness and joy, curiosity for learning, of each young Indian must be protected regardless of his/her religion, gender, physical or mental inability, race, caste, religion, language, sect, status etc. The World Happiness Index specifies that a nation where the youth is protected and educated, and being cared, grows in all aspects of development. The indicators must also include a pinch of happiness, to ensure reduced suicides, hunger deaths, killings in religious riots and abduction. Health benefits must reach on time when it is needed. Corruption in this aspect must be controlled. The promises are yet to be enacted through the bottom to the top level of corruption-free governance.

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