

ENGAGING YOUTH IN NATION BUILDING: CHALLENGES AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

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Abstract

Youth contribute in nation building through community development and participation in democratic processes of the country. In the process they face various challenges like monopoly of elder leaders, lack of familial and community support, lack of employment etc. Youth club provides youths a trust, respect, and responsibility to work for the development and social justice. The study attempts to understand the participation, challenges and achievements of youth clubs in the process of community development. Objective of the study is to analyse the nature and process of youth clubs at village level. 100 youths from 10 youth clubs were participated in the study. The study has conducted in 10 villages of Udgir Tahsil in Latur district of Maharashtra. Mixed method approach was used for the study. Primarily Interview schedule and focus group discussion were used for data collection besides that researcher conducted few case studies demonstrating contribution and failure of the youth clubs.

Keywords: Community Development, Youth Club, Community Leader, GramSabha



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Introduction:

The concept of youth is defined from various perspectives. United Nation defines youth as “a group that falls in the 15 to 24 years age category”. The national youth policy initially (in 2003) defined the youth as in the age group 13-35. However, national youth policy of India, 2014 modified it and defined ‘youth’ as a person in the age group of 15-29 years (National Youth Policy, 2014). This is not to say that the term youth is universally defined in the same manner. According to the United Nations “youth is biological entity and it is classified by the numbers” (www.un.org). Defining youth in India is very difficult because of its wide differences in terms of social, economic and cultural background. Most of the scholars argued that, concept of youth is state of mind where someone who has fresh outlook towards life. Youth hood is the period of life when person is in full of dynamism, motivations and enthusiasm of life. India is the country with a large population of youth in the age group of

13 to 35. Youth constitutes one-fifth (19.1%) of India's total population and is expected to have 34.33% share of youth in total population by 2020 (Census 2011).

Energy possessed by youth is an accepted strength and can be used for both constructive and destructive intentions. Participation of youth in community development has more advantage, in one way the massive youth power is positively mobilized, and on the other the youth is saved from falling to the disruptive element. Participation of youth in the community developmental activity creates the sense of pride and self-confidence in them. Youth of today is a citizen of tomorrow hence future of the country is determined to a large extent by what the youth learn in their formative years. That is why every civilized country pays adequate attention towards an essential need of training, education and general upbringing of the youth. If their upbringing done in a proper manner then only these youth force will engage in these developmental process positively. If the energy channelize into creative and constructive way then this energy and enthusiasm may be diverted towards undesirable manner. Now the role of youth is so important that every political party or religious groups are trying to create a base of youth for their purpose and they make use of the vibrant and charisma of youth.

National development depends through the encouragement of youth participation and created as a constructive force for the community development. Usually, youth club gets formulated and institutionalized on the basis of community needs, common issues in the village and interest pertaining to the youths. In the beginning youths in the village comes together and discuss their aspiration, interest, objectives and takes guidance from community key persons like teachers, service men's, PRI members etc. of the village. Having formed the club, they move to organizing the structure in terms of division of powers and responsibilities amongst the members with the consultation with the group. This process enables youth club to establish a strong nexus with the government officials as well as community. This paper summarizes the challenges and achievement of youth clubs at village level.

Challenges of working with the community

Since youth itself is a vulnerable section in the society, facing several problems while working with the community. Along with the own issues they work towards the issues concerning to general village community. 58 % of respondents said that they faces problems while working in the village and 42 % of the respondents said they don't face any problem or difficulties while working in the youth club. One youth club leader reported that "we
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could not participate in community work because of the moral pressure of our familial responsibilities, worries associated to career. Many times our parent opposes our participation in the youth club, as they think that because of the participation in the youth club we are unable to perform our responsibilities properly as they expects". Youth club members currently pursuing their studies confronting challenges to manage their college life and youth club work. They face difficulties to plan their study due to active participation in the youth club activities.

Data shows 22 % of youths are directly working in agriculture and 22 % are engaged in agriculture based employment that means nearly 50 % of the youth population in the villages are dependent on agriculture and allied activities. 11 % youths are working as a manual laborer and 5% youths are working in the government service. 40 % of the respondents were unemployed at the time of data collection. Marathwada is a drought prone region and due to the regular drought prone situation large number of youth bear with the economic crises. Imperative concern expressed by the youth club is the problem of funding. 71 % youth's reported, they don't get funding support and 26 % of youth have reported that they get's financial assistant and remaining 3 % respondents were not aware about the funding support of their youth club. Youth clubs that are affiliated with the Nehru Yuva Kendra reported that they gets some financial support to carry out their activities

For proper functioning, any organization needs sufficient resources with them. Youth clubs requires professional staffs, money, material, educated and trained members as a resource for their better work and constructive impact. But due to the lack of these resources youth clubs are unable to replicate their good work at a larger level. It is also been reported that sometimes government officials involves in financial malpractices. As reported by the respondents, they face financial corruption when they approach to government machinery for social schemes for their youth club. A youth associated with Nehru Yuva Kendra said "*Saheb paise ghatalyasivay, paise milat nahi*" meaning without spending can't get money.

There is an enhancement in the social status of youths participated in youth clubs, but at the same time they are facing egos of dominant community leaders. It has been reported that 63 % respondents participates in the Gram Sabha on a regular basis while 24 % respondents did not, remaining 13 % respondents said they participates sometimes. Most of the Gram Sabhas are politically influenced and not easily allowed common people in decision making. At this juncture, the youth clubs are educating and sensitizing the people about the importance of Gram Sabha meetings. For the reason that these established politically motivated peoples

from the village don't want youth as their opponent and therefore they are creating barriers in the youth participation in community developments. In such milieu youths are struggling to manage with the monopoly of elderly dominant community leaders. Along with that there is a strong group dynamics seen, caused by the aspiration of leadership role in the youth clubs. One of the main reasons of group dynamics is the feeling of avoidance from planning process and political motivation. It is furthermore reported that domestic responsibilities, lack of financial freedom, rising of politics criminalization, and worries of character assassination are the factors which affect the women's participation in youth club and overall process of community development. Data shows that male shares their 74% of representation in the youth clubs while women's represented only 26% in the youth clubs as office bearers. Amongst the 10 youth club studied, women were holding position of only one president, 2 were vice-president and 2 were treasurers.

Achievements of youth clubs

Youth clubs are formed with the prime motives of youth participation in the community development. 40 % of the respondents have said that they have achieved the purpose of establishing the youth club. 44 % respondents said that they are working towards the achievement of the purpose. Remaining 16 % of the youth respondents reported that they have not achieved the purpose. Social interaction of youths in public domain has increased. Community members listen youth much seriously and appreciate their work. Youths are building partnership with the community through the awareness and education. Youth clubs build trust and credibility and developed good working relationship with the communities, people's representatives and government authorities. Support group is valuable resource which youth club has created. Youth clubs utilizes community resources to deal with the problems in village. Youth clubs have support system within the community which plays important role in the process of community development. Youth club encourages likeminded people to contribute their expertise and experiences that they have learned along the way. They brought youth in an organized and structured format. While working with the youth club, youths have developed contacts in the government offices like PRI's, Tahsil office, Panchyat Samitee office, Police stations etc. Youth club members use such contacts in the needful situation in the village.

Youths in the villages have been inspired from the youth clubs for community work. In the process of youth club various issues related to the village community are discussed and awareness is generated. Villagers are giving their participation towards the village issues

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because of the awareness generated by the youth clubs. Youth clubs are working outside the social order and tradition due to which change in thought process has started in youths. Large numbers of youth clubs are working together towards a common purpose of village development and that's become a movement of change in rural area. The most recognizing achievement of the youth club is their initiatives in tax collection. Youth clubs are seen to be taking initiatives to aware communities about the importance of the tax payment and responsibilities as citizens. They are also reported of taking initiatives in the public service activities which Grampanchyat are supposed to undertake like, cleaning the gutter, taking care of plants, taking care of water tab, taking care of street light etc.

Conclusion

Youth clubs are more concerned to help villagers in educating them as regards with their rights and responsibilities. They believe, making people self dependent in understanding and taking initiatives for their own development in the villages. Youth members in the clubs are very energetic, enthusiastic and also pro-service to the people and society at large. Youth clubs are attempting to focus the common issue of the village. Youth participation involves community mobilisation which includes identifying the community problems, locating the resources to tackle the problems, deal with the local power structure to improve the life of village community.

In other words youth participation improved the skills and attitude of youths which need to take part in community development process. Because of the youth club the sense of contributing to the society has increased amongst to the youths and they are closely connected with the villagers

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