Original Research Paper | **Management**

LETS CONNECT WITH YOUTH (YOUTH PROBLEMS & SOLUTIONS)

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ABSTRACT The world is rapidly ageing but India is still young. India is having Demographic Dividend a window of opportunity, from the year 2020 till 2050. This means that we have the maximum young population (15-64) years of working. The median age of the Indian population is less than 29 years in year 2022 . India has about 67% of its population in the working age group of 15-64byears –the segment we call it as demographic dividend. This window of opportunity is further more advantageous as other nations like USA & Japan have aging population. The need of the hour is tapping the talent powerhouse of our youth. But do we know youth. Do we understand young people. One in seven young person is depressed in India as per UNICEF report 2021. 80% percent of India's workforce reported mental health issued but only half took steps to seek mental help. These figures are alarming enough for industry, educational institutes & government to frame policies, take steps to bring back our youth into mainstream with full vigour, confidence & optimum productivity level. Unless the preparatory work of skilling, reskilling and job creation happens, India stands to lose the opportunity of demographic dividend . To harness the youth potential we first need to understand the problems of youth and then frame polices that are executed to employ youth productively and at the same time their mental and physical health is well taken care of. The session deliberates on problems of youth and suggests practical solutions to these.

KEYWORDS :

INTRODUCTION

The world is rapidly ageing, but India is still young. In the next few decades, India will be a talent powerhouse and the largest contributor to the global workforce. There is no denying the extraordinary opportunity. According to a CII report, if India's demographic dividend is productively employed, growth prospects will brighten, helping it to leapfrog its GDP from the current $3 trillion to $9 trillion by 2030 and $40 trillion by 2047. It is required that we tap this potential to the fullest

The Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth presents the YouthStats overview highlighting the situation of young people around the world .But it is not easy to understand the anxieties and concerns of young people in 2022 .While parents, teachers may want to understand and support them it can sometimes be difficult to know where to start.

To understand the youth every year ,The United Nations celebrates International Youth Day on August 12. International Youth Day celebrates the idea that young people hold the key to the future It's a chance to recognize the potential of young people; to change the world for the better, and to highlight the challenges and problems they face.

Indian youth

As per the YouthStats Indian forms a major majority of working population constituting 16% of the global workforce (young Indian men) & constitute 5% of   global workforce (young Indian women). Another survey report by YOUNG INDIA WORK-- A SURVEY OF YOUTH ASPIRATIONS-2018-by World Economic forum reports below mentioned highlights :

- 1.3 million people enter the working age population in India every month as half of the country's population of 1.3 billion is below the age of 25, there is a demographic advantage to be realised.
- 51 percent of respondents identified the lack of guidance in identifying jobs that match their skill sets as the main barrier when looking for a desirable job.
- 41 percent of youth selected flexible work arrangements, such as flexibility in scheduling and work location, as significant work considerations.
- 68 percent of respondents believe clear communication to be one of the most important general skills required.
- 57 percent report analytical thinking, 51 percent report teamwork, and 50 percent report creativity, originality, and initiative as important general skills.

These are strikingly in line with expected changes in skills requirements resulting from technological adoption and digitization. The session takes cues from youth stats   and deliberates on education, health and employment and general overview related to youth.

Youth stats by United Nation

The session discusses about following areas concerning young generation.

1. Education & Employment
2. Mental Health
3. Social Media
4. Peer Pressure
5. Body Image Anxieties
6. Uncertainty
7. Bullying
8. Validation of others

Education & Employment—

Education and employment are the two core areas concerning young people. Research conducted by YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) found that 44% of young people have concerns about their studies and exam pressures. Moreover, education has become an area of a young person's life rife with the pressures of competition. Academic standards are higher than ever as more people each year are expected to

enter further education. Alongside academic excellence, students must prove that they are well-rounded individuals that have taken an array of extracurricular activities: accepted volunteering responsibilities; or entered internships.

Despite more young people than ever gaining higher-level academic qualifications, there is a perception that young people are unprepared for work. This leads itself to increased concerns about financial instability. As university and housing costs are rising , young people are unable to easily chart a course for their future.

Mental health –
More young people are experiencing mental health difficulties. Young people identified their top 5 health issues as as per Youth Survey 2021 YMCA

- smoking/vaping (78%),
- mental health/depression/stress (64%),
- bullying online & offline (54%),
- drugs (51%), and
- alcohol (50%)---

Another study by Deloitte reports -80% of India's workforce reported mental health issues during the past year. Despite these alarming numbers, the report said social stigmas around mental health issues prevented 39% of the affected respondents from taking steps to manage their symptoms.

It is important for young people to know how to reach out to others to the support that could help them, it is also important for those around young people to know the signs themselves.

Social Media
On an average youth spends 6 or more hours daily using social media or streaming content online as per report of Youth Survey 2021 YMCA .The rise of technology has had a significant impact on the lives of young people. Technology is an amazing tool, however, it impacts self-perception and privacy. It is a way to share creative and fun ideas, the social media world is both complex and confusing, and poses significant risks. For instance, young people first navigating social media might be exposed to inappropriate content that they are unprepared to witness.

Developing an understanding of creating and maintaining positive relationships online is a huge task that some young people may not be ready for. The misconceptions, and the glamorizing of a fake reality can cause online problems to become all to real.

Another problem is Social isolation which can cause a number of effects such as physical, emotional, mental and psychological issues in these youths. Too much social interaction can also lead to losing thyself. It also leads to misspelling of words and misuse of words and tenses through the use of short forms and abbreviations. This has a high negative impact because it affects their language capabilities directly and this lead to poor grades in languages.

Peer Pressure-- '
Peer pressure' relates to the role that others can have in influencing how an individual acts. It starts as early as the age of 9 The desire to seek approval, be in the same group, encourages to reinforce positive habits. But the idea of being cool, not to be left behind may also force into risk taking behaviour such as drinking alcohol, taking drugs, or being exposed to gang crime, doubts on self.

Body Image Anxieties –
Body image anxieties impact the lives of many young people. With the rise of social media apps pictures of bodies are shared constantly. Research by YMCA found that more than half of young people (52%) regularly worry about the way they look. How they see themselves can affect every aspect of their lives — either negatively or positively. It affects their short- and long-term choices. It can impact their ability to meet people and make friends. It can prevent them from wanting to try new things or even seek higher education. These social consequences often last a lifetime..

Uncertainty
Uncertainty over the future is a major concern for many young people. The 2021 American Psychological Association study on stress reports that youth are experiencing higher stress levels about the future than adults due to the disruptions caused by the coronavirus. The world is undergoing profound transformations, new actors, new scripts, an evolving stage, but all in a state of uncertainty and confusion. High levels of intolerance to social and other uncertainty in general among all.

## Suggestions -- Let's Connect the missing Dots.........
Education and Employment ---Being literate and Educated
There's a huge differences between being literate and being educated. We are not educated because for us education means mugging up everything and vomiting that in exams. How often do we actually utilize what we studied in our daily lives.

Though we have a literacy rate of 74.04% most of us are just literate not EDUCATED.

Youth unemployment is a complex policy issue with no silver-bullet solutions. Simple approaches based on individual employability are destined to fail. To be successful, education and training programs must work with local communities alongside investment in regional economies aimed at creating new employment opportunities when established industries leave. To reduce youth unemployment, education and labour market policies must go beyond a focus on individual young people to offer solutions at a community level.

Market System Approach
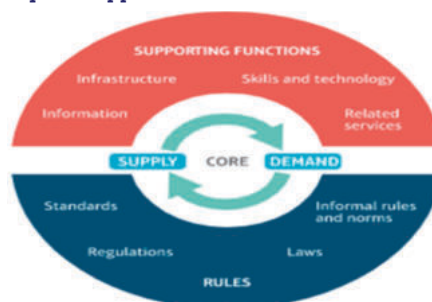
Mental Health Issues ---Let's address
Everything on social media is not the complete truth , everyone who is posting they are happy even if they are not happy in real.

We have Insecurity about thoughts, insecurity about actions, insecurity about their way of life Meeting real people in person would help instead of wasting time on social media The fore sightness should begin by adequately preparing teachers for the emotional well-being of their students.

Emotional literacy should be a key focus and should be integrated into all aspects of the education curriculum. .An atmosphere of care, empathy, and inclusive practices should be encouraged India's Health Ministry launched a 24-hour mental health service called Tele Mental Health Assistance and Networking Across States (Tele-MANAS).The only solutions for these major issues among youth is to talk to someone. Everyone wants an ear who can hear them.

Social Media –Handling it with sensitivity

With so many ideas shared across a number of platforms, we can discover areas of interest and use the platforms in an educational capacity. We can campaign for social good. Young people can also use their accounts as bespoke CVs to share their achievements, showcase their talents and build a positive online portfolio that can benefit them in later life.

Every like, dislike, comment doesn't make our life. Having 2000 Fb friends is fake; We can have one real friend. We should learn to enjoy the moment instead of eager to flaunt on social media.

Albert Einstein once said, "I fear the day that technology will surpass our human interaction. The world will have a generation of idiots." Lets be smarter than our smart phones

Peer Pressure --BE ASSERTIVE

The only way to deal with it is by having assertiveness. If something doesn't feel right about a situation, it probably isn't. Even if friends seem ok with what is going on, the situation may not be right for us. These steps will surely help in dealing with peer pressure.

- Plan ahead---Think about how you will respond in different situations. Plan what you can say or what you can do.
- Talk to the person who is pressuring,----let him or her know how it makes you feel and tell the person stop.
- It should be ok to say "no" without needing to apologize or give an explanation. But it may make it easier to say no if we have a ready reason. Or even stating that my parents need me to come home, if we feel it would be best to leave the situation all together.
- Have friends with similar values and beliefs. It is easier to say "no" if someone else is also saying it. Saying "no" together makes it easier for the both
- Get support from adults . A trusted adult can listen to and help with strategies that might work in that situation.

Body Image Anxieties—Adults can teach

Body image is a big part of youth self-esteem. If youth don't like the way they look or are dissatisfied with their bodies, their self-esteem will suffer. How they see themselves can affect every aspect of their lives — either negatively or positively. It affects their short- and long-term choices. It can impact their ability to meet people and make friends. It can prevent them from wanting to try new things or even seek higher education. These social consequences often last a lifetime. There are health consequences, too. People with low self-esteem are more likely to be depressed and have anxiety. We as parents and teachers can guide them by adopting following practices :
- Don't talk about dieting. Do talk about eating healthy, not dieting.
- Don't talk about exercising to lose weight. Do talk about exercising to be stronger.
- Don't talk about wanting to improve body to be more attractive. Do talk about improving body to be ready for whatever life has to offer.
- Don't shy away from being photographed.
- Don't focus only on outer appearance. Praise for "inner" attributes.

CONCLUSION

We should have a holistic approach in understanding young people. .One should cater the necessary guidance of parents, teachers, mentors in the life of young people so that India can have a bright future with young generation reaping the opportunity of Demographic Dividend

Everything starts when we start to change ourselves for positivity. The results are ripple effects of the positivity.   We should elaborate on   how to be better version of our "SELF"

following gratitude, thinking positively, knowing thyself from inside. These are the panacea for being our own best version.