

REVISITING EDUCATION AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT AMONG YOUTH IN INDIA IN THE CONTEXT OF MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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The issue of youth, particularly in the context of their educational development, was also accorded priority in the UN initiated Millennium Development Goal (MDGs). Drawing lessons from the past progress made by countries, the issue of youth finds more prominent place in the post-2015 MDGs development paradigm, being termed as United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) paradigm. India has made considerable progress towards meeting the MDGs target, particularly relating to universalisation of education and improvements in youth literacy. However, its track record in recuing poverty, hunger, malnutrition and creating decent employment has been less than satisfactory. Given this brief background, this paper examines the human capital base of the youth population, highlights the magnitude of caste, gender and regional disparities and shows how a large section of the youth is still characterised by low levels of educational attainment and skill training. It also briefly examines the progress made so far in creating decent employment for youth.

THE ISSUE

Accounting for a population of over 333.4 million in 2011, the youth¹ represent 27.5 per cent of the Indian population (Population Census 2011). India is among the few countries having the advantage of being home to a relatively higher proportion of younger population. Across the world, every fifth youth is an Indian. This demographic dividend of a rising share of the working age population (15-59 years), which came into effect in the early 1980s is likely to remain till 2025 (ILO 2013; Aiyar and Mody 2011). Such a huge proportion of a relatively young population in India is expected to add to both its economic growth and the consequent demand for goods and services (Bloom and Canning 2004; Aiyar and Mody 2011). However, this 'demographic dividend' can turn into a 'demographic nightmare' if opportunities are not created for the all-round development of the youth, including quality education and decent employment (Chandrasekhar, *et al.* 2006). The information technology (IT) revolution and increasing use of social media has facilitated an unprecedented mobilisation of the youth to reflect on issues of their concerns (World Bank 2013a). Uprising in the Middle East, called the 'Arab Spring', and the voices criticising corruption and demanding clean governance in India are examples of mobilisation of the youth to bring about a change in the existing systems.

The major issues that confront the youth include the high incidence of unemployment as well as under-employment, limited opportunities for remunerative jobs, low levels of education and skills, and the quest for identity and dignity (ILO 2013; FES 2012; Mitra and Verick 2013). All this applies to India as well. The youth suffer disproportionately more than others from slow growth in employment opportunities and an economic slowdown (ILO 2013). Moreover, the growth process in India has also resulted in rising inequality in incomes and human capital formations, which, in turn, has caused significant disparities across various social groups and regions (Planning Commission 2013). The marginalised sections of the population, such as Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Scheduled Castes (SCs) still remain at the bottom of the social hierarchy in terms of various

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socio-economic indicators of development (Mamgain 2013). Much of their slow development is increasingly being attributed to social exclusion and discrimination which they continue to face in their daily lives in various forms (World Bank 2013b; Thorat and Newman, 2010).

Growing mismatches in the demand and supply of education and skills is yet another dimension that affects the overall employability of youth in India and several other countries as well (ILO 2010; Chadha 2000; Mamgain 2010). While on the one hand, employers complain against shortages of skilled manpower that pose hurdles in their expansion (India Skills Report 2014; ILO 2013), on the other hand, there is a very high rate of unemployment among educated youth, particularly women (Dev and Venkatanarayana 2011). Employers find a large number of job-seekers unemployable due to insufficient exposure of the latter to practical aspects of education.

The issue of youth, particularly in the context of their educational development, was also accorded priority in the UN initiated Millennium Development Goal (MDGs). Drawing lessons from the past progress made by countries, the issue of youth finds more prominent place in the post-2015 MDGs development paradigm, being termed as United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) paradigm. SDGs goal 4 specifically aims to (a) improve the access and quality of technical, vocational and tertiary education to all women and men, (b) substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship; (c) eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations; and (d) ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy (United Nations General Assembly, Sixty-ninth session, Agenda items 13 (a) and 115, 12 August 2015). India has made considerable progress towards meeting the MDGs target, particularly relating to universalisation of education and improvements in youth literacy. However, its track record in reducing poverty, hunger, malnutrition and creating decent employment has been less than satisfactory (GoI-MoSPI, 2014, Millennium Development Goals-India Country Report 2014, Central Statistical Organisation, New Delhi).

Given this brief background, this paper examines the human capital base of the youth population, highlights the magnitude of caste, gender and regional disparities and shows how a large section of the youth is still characterised by low levels of educational attainment and skill training. It also briefly examines the progress made so far in creating decent employment for youth.

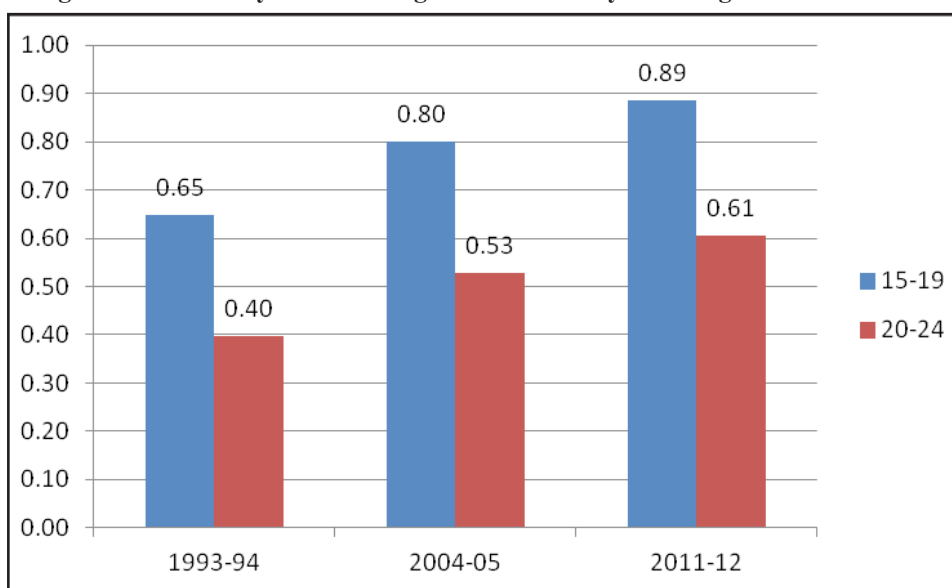
EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AMONG YOUTH

Nearly 30 per cent of youth were reported as students in 2011-12. There was a remarkable increase in the population of youth pursuing their education as their proportion nearly doubled during the period 1993-94 to 2011-12. This increase in the number of youth pursuing their education largely occurred since 2004-05 (Table 1). It has been more so in case of young females, resulting in improvement in gender parity ratio. However, the gender parity ratio still remains much lower in the age group 20-24 years (Fig. 1). The credit for this goes to the special focus of government policies on developing education access and also redistributive measures such as scholarships, educational loans, MNREGA, etc., leading to larger enrolment in post-secondary educational institutions in recent years.

Table 1: Percentage Share Of Students Among Youth

Age-group	Male	Female	Person
1993-94			
15-19	41.9	27.17	35.23
20-24	11.55	4.59	8.04
25-29	1.38	0.32	0.83
15-29	20.58	10.95	15.88
2004-05			
15-19	47.72	38.22	43.34
20-24	12.95	6.85	9.89
25-29	1.52	0.46	0.99
15-29	19.06	13.75	16.55
2011-12			
15-19	65.99	58.47	62.58
20-24	23.94	14.52	19.28
25-29	2.85	1.32	2.07
15-29	34.5	25.66	30.22

Nearly 30 per cent of youth were reported as students in 2011-12. There was a remarkable increase in the population of youth pursuing their education as their proportion nearly doubled during the period 1993-94 to 2011-12. This increase in the number of youth pursuing their education largely occurred since 2004-05 (Table 1). It has been more so in case of young females, resulting in improvement in gender parity ratio. However, the gender parity ratio still remains much lower in the age group 20-24 years (Fig. 1). The credit for this goes to the special focus of government policies on developing education access and also redistributive measures such as scholarships, educational loans, MNREGA, etc., leading to larger enrolment in post-secondary educational institutions in recent years.

Fig 1: Gender Parity Ratio Among Youth Currently Pursuing Their Education

Paradoxically, about 30 per cent of the youth were attending educational institutions in 2011-12, yet over 13 per cent of the youth in the country still remain illiterate (Table 2). While over 55 per cent of the youth population has acquired education up to the middle school level and below, 35 per cent of the youth have attained education up to the high school and higher secondary level. The share of graduates among the youth stands at 8.6 per cent but the proportion of those with technical education is abysmally low, little over 3 per cent of the total youth population (Table 2).

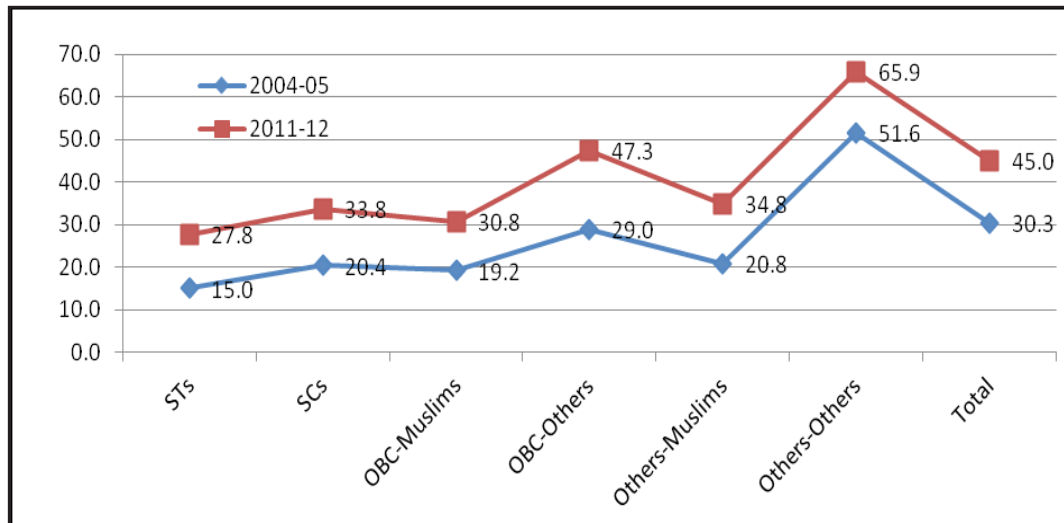
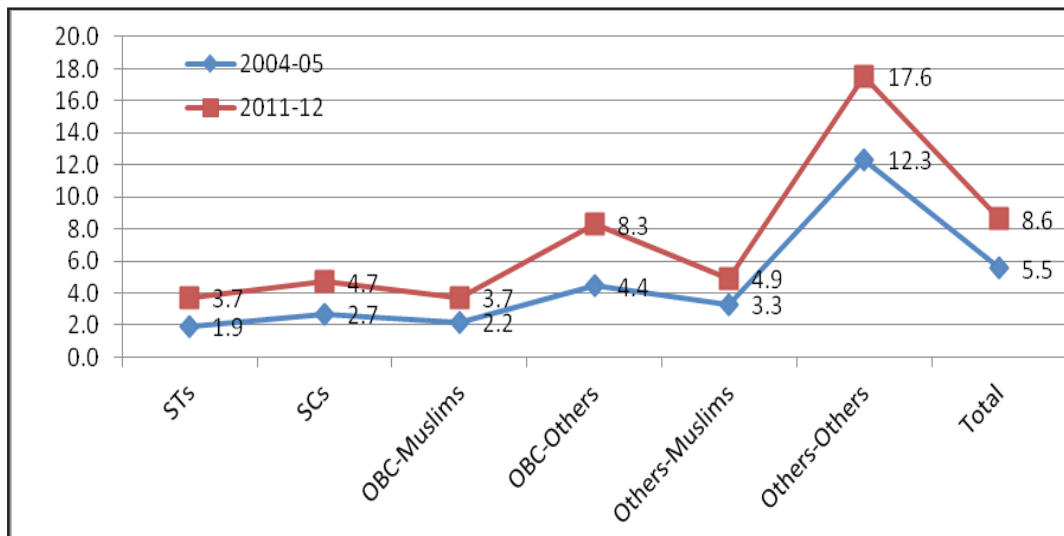
Table 2: Trends in Educational Development of Youths

Education Levels	1993-94	2004-05	2011-12
Illiterate	38.55	22.8	13.14
Up to the Primary Level	24.39	23.65	19.19
Middle Level	19.71	23.25	22.70
Secondary and Senior Secondary Level	13.2	23.38	34.55
Diploma and Certificate.	0.20	1.38	1.78
Graduate and Above	3.96	5.54	8.63
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00
Technical Degree-holder	0.09	0.28	0.49
Technical Diploma-holder below the Degree Level	0.81	1.62	2.04
Technical Diploma-holder equivalent to a Degree	0.99	0.87	0.75
Total-Technical Degree/Diploma-holders	0.89	2.77	3.28

If seen gender-wise, over 18 per cent of the female youths are illiterate as compared to the much lower corresponding figure of 8.5 per cent for their male counterparts. Interestingly, the proportion of graduates among female youths is close to that for males (over 8 per cent). However, the proportion of female youths having technical degrees and diplomas is almost half of that for male youths (4.17 per cent and 2.34 per cent, respectively) in 2011-12.

Significant disparities still exist between the educational attainments of youths belonging to various socio-religious groups. Over one-fifth of the ST and OBC-Muslim youths are still illiterate at the dawn of the twenty-first century whereas the proportion of such youths is less than 4 per cent among the OCs. The proportion of youths with secondary level of education is almost double among the OCs as compared to the STs. Similarly, the percentage of graduates is much higher among the OCs than among the STs, SCs and Muslims. A similar pattern can be observed in the case of youths with technical degree and diploma level educational attainments. It may thus be concluded that where higher educational attainments are concerned, the OCs are on top, followed by the OBC-Others, Other-Muslims, SCs, OBC-Muslims and lastly, the STs (Figures 2 and 3).

There has been a significant improvement in the educational levels of youths during the period 1993-94 to 2011-12, a fact that has been confirmed by earlier research too (IAMR 2011; IHD-ISLE 2014). The proportion of graduates and of those who have passed secondary and senior secondary levels among youths more than doubled during the period. Although the ratio of technical degree-holders among the youth is low, it improved by 5.4 times since 1993-94. However, such improvement has been uneven across various socio-religious groups. Between 2004-05 and 2011-12, the relative gap of percentage share of 'Graduate and above' among OCs and ST/SC youths widened with a faster improvement in the case of OCs. The youth belonging to the category of OBC-Others have also achieved considerable improvement in their educational levels, particularly at the secondary level as compared to ST, SC and Muslim youth (Figures 2 and 3).

Figure 2: Percentage of Youths with Education of Secondary and Above Level**Figure 3: Percentage of Youths with Education of Graduate and Above Level**

In brief, despite a few significant improvements in the literacy levels of youths belonging to the ST, SC and OBC-Muslim groups, their transition to a higher level of education has been rather slow as compared to that of OCs and OBC-Others. This has seriously hampered their employability and prospects to move to better occupations.

Regional Trends in Educational Development of Youth

There exist significant regional disparities in the educational development of youth in India. A highest one-fourth of youth are still illiterate in Bihar as compared to almost full literacy in Kerala in 2011-12. Other states with comparatively higher illiteracy rates among youth include Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. These states generally lag behind in various

development indicators, including per capita income. However, the rate of decline in illiteracy rates in most of these states have been sizeable yet comparatively slower than other states during the period 1993-94 to 2011-12. For example, the rate of decline in illiteracy among youth has been highest in Tamil Nadu, followed by Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Karnataka and Haryana (Table 3).

Attaining high school level education opens gateways for different streams of education. From this perspective it is an important indicator of educational development of population. We have combined educational attainments of secondary school and above into a category of 'educated' for understanding the regional diversities in the human capital formation among youth in India since 1993-94. From this perspective, Goa ranks on top as three-fourths of its youth belong to the category of educated persons in 2011-12. Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi and Tamil Nadu are other states among top five states. At the bottom stream are Orissa, West Bengal, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. The percentage share of educated among youth therein ranges between 32 to 37 per cent. Surprisingly, the percentage of educated youth in a developed state like Gujarat is less (42.4 per cent) than national average of 45 per cent.

Table 3: Literacy Rates Among Youth

States	1993-94	2004-05	2010-11
Andhra Pradesh	54.08	70.86	86.6
Assam	76.68	85.25	92.8
Bihar	48.23	60.6	75.02
Chhattisgarh	54.15	79.39	89.99
Delhi	78.84	91.1	94.47
Goa	90.68	96.04	95.91
Gujarat	72.16	84.08	91.08
Haryana	68.83	84.45	92.36
Himachal Pradesh	83.07	93.13	97.48
Jammu & Kashmir	73.95	79.59	89.91
Jharkhand	48.44	69.98	77.85
Karnataka	63.82	80.9	91.39
Kerala	97.95	98.48	99.61
Madhya Pradesh	53.86	72.02	84.22
Maharashtra	78.16	90.02	95.18
Orissa	58.52	74.19	85.52
Punjab	73.02	85.08	91.33
Rajasthan	50.96	65.21	78.88
Tamil Nadu	76.42	92.05	96.94
Uttar Pradesh	54.95	67.96	79.6
Uttaranchal	74.21	86.13	94.75
West Bengal	69.3	80.17	88.11
Total	64.45	77.71	86.85

The educational level of youth witnessed a significant improvement between 1993-94 and 2011-12. At national level, the proportion of educated youth almost doubled from 23 per cent in 1993-94 to about 45 per cent in 2011-12. States which experienced a significant jump in the share of educated among their youth population include Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Madhya

Pradesh, Karnataka, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand and Orissa. Most of these states still have to attain the levels of those ranking at top five positions in 2011-12 (Table 4).

Yet another way of looking at the educational levels of youth is percentage of graduates among them. The probability of getting employment, particularly salaried jobs increases significantly with the improvement in educational levels. This is true for youth also (Mamgain and Tiwari, 2015). Viewed from this perspective, there are significant regional differences in the share of graduates among youth belonging to different states. Delhi with over one-fifth of its youth population being graduate and above ranks on the top, whereas Bihar ranks at the bottom with only 4 per cent of its youth population being graduate and above education. Other states among top five ranking states are Goa, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Haryana. Again at the bottom other than Bihar are at least nine states with their percentage share ranging between 8 to 4 per cent in 2011-12. The higher proportion of graduates in the youth population of Delhi and Goa is perhaps due to large share of urban population therein and also higher per capita income (Table 5).

Table 4: Percentage of Educated (High School and above) Among Youth

States	1993-94	2004-05	2010-11
Andhra Pradesh	19.45	32.67	54.89
Assam	22.86	24.20	38.09
Bihar	19.76	21.52	33.05
Chhattisgarh	18.23	22.37	35.43
Delhi	47.75	51.85	65.60
Goa	48.21	56.52	74.31
Gujarat	28.48	36.04	42.40
Haryana	30.77	42.17	58.85
Himachal Pradesh	30.80	47.78	67.50
Jammu & Kashmir	27.30	34.31	51.61
Jharkhand	20.07	22.75	37.72
Karnataka	26.48	34.85	55.93
Kerala	38.39	51.61	70.52
Madhya Pradesh	17.77	22.83	34.25
Maharashtra	30.71	41.48	58.28
Orissa	16.47	23.38	32.43
Punjab	32.98	45.58	54.05
Rajasthan	15.62	20.88	36.38
Tamil Nadu	26.76	42.11	62.47
Uttar Pradesh	19.87	25.63	37.43
Uttaranchal	29.24	40.12	56.70
West Bengal	16.91	23.53	32.52
Total	23.45	31.17	44.96

Overall, the proportion of graduates among youth more than doubled between 1993-94 and 2011-12. Their proportion tripled in Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Jammu & Kashmir, Andhra Pradesh and also in Kerala and Himachal Pradesh. In states like Bihar, Jharkhand, Gujarat, Uttarakhand and Delhi the share of graduates improved marginally during the period 1993-94 to 2011-12. States like Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Jammu & Kashmir and Andhra Pradesh had nearly same proportion of graduates among their youths as that was the case of states like Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and West

Bengal (Table 5). However, the sharp increase in the share of graduate youth in the former category of states as compared to the latter only shows how state initiatives could improve the educational levels of their population.

Table 5: State-Wise Percentage Of Graduates Among Youth

States	1993-94	2004-05	2010-11
Andhra Pradesh	3.33	6.12	10.46
Assam	2.44	3.12	4.69
Bihar	3.76	2.81	4.03
Chhattisgarh	2.78	5.01	5.04
Delhi	16.31	14.93	21.85
Goa	5.16	11.41	16.41
Gujarat	4.96	7.12	7.79
Haryana	4.05	7.49	11.99
Himachal Pradesh	3.60	6.30	9.24
Jammu & Kashmir	3.54	4.03	10.82
Jharkhand	3.92	4.83	5.85
Karnataka	3.76	4.87	8.50
Kerala	4.90	7.07	13.93
Madhya Pradesh	2.86	5.23	6.16
Maharashtra	5.42	7.62	11.63
Orissa	3.18	5.04	5.19
Punjab	4.05	6.46	9.34
Rajasthan	3.58	3.92	8.61
Tamil Nadu	4.05	8.30	13.38
Uttar Pradesh	3.72	5.66	7.72
Uttaranchal	7.08	8.98	11.79
West Bengal	4.01	5.00	7.31
Total	4.10	5.85	8.63

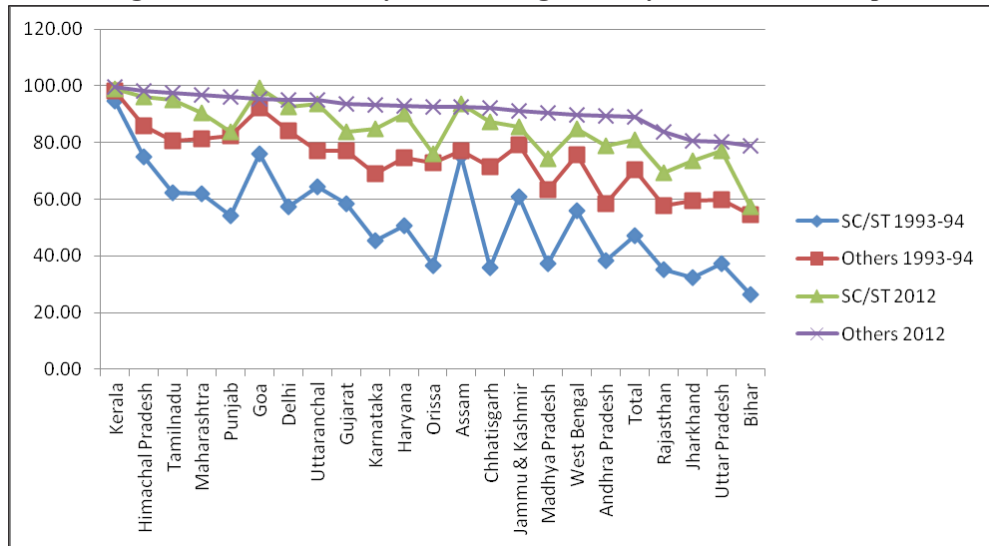
Educational Development among SC/ST Youth

As observed earlier, there remain significant differences in the educational development of youth belonging to various social groups. SC/STs trail behind the other social groups in their educational development across all states in India. A highest 42 per cent of SC/ST youth population in Bihar is illiterate in 2011-12; the corresponding figure for other castes is also high at 21 per cent in the state. Other states having sizeable gap in literacy levels (over 10 percentage points) between SC/ST and Other youths include Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab and Gujarat (Fig.4). On the other extreme, states like Goa, Kerala, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Tamil Nadu have reached very near to 100 per cent

Like-wise the lower literacy rates, the proportion of educated among SC/ST is significantly low as compared to Non-SC/ST youth across almost all states. The gap is highest in Punjab between SC/ST and Non-SC/ST youth (31 percentage points), followed by Haryana (28.7 percentage points),

Orissa (26.1 percentage points), Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh (25 percentage points each). Such wide gap in the educational attainments of SC/ST youth in relatively developed states like Punjab and Haryana are perplexing and need further investigation (Fig. 5 & 6).

Fig. 4: Trends in Literacy Rates among Youth by Their Social Groups



It clearly emerges that special measures would be required to improve the educational levels of youth in those states which are lagging far behind. These include Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan. This will be possible through improving access to quality educational infrastructure, supported by public finances. Equally important to note is that faster improvement in the educational development of youth will only be possible when educational development of SC/ST youth improves at a much faster pace. This would be possible through increased role of public funding for the educational development and not leaving it to the private sector entirely.

Fig. 5: Trends in Percentage Share of Educated Persons among Youth by Their Social Groups

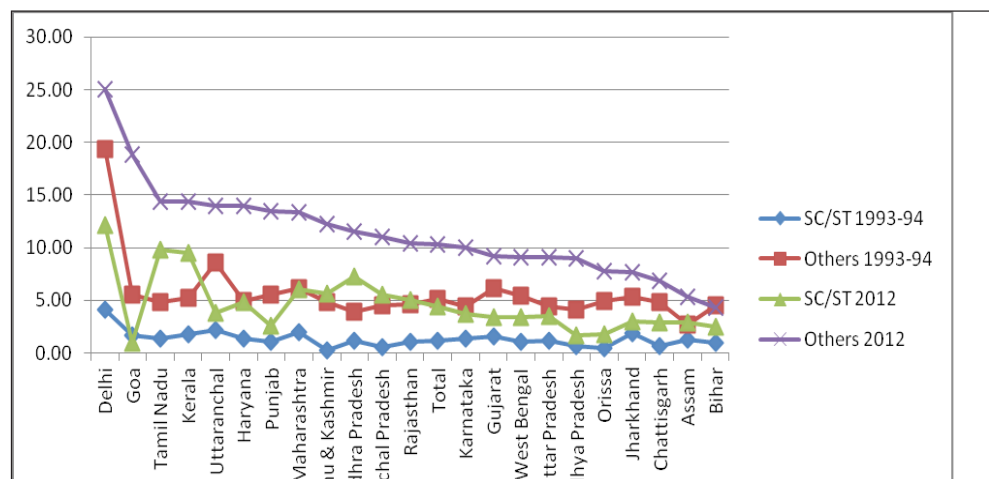
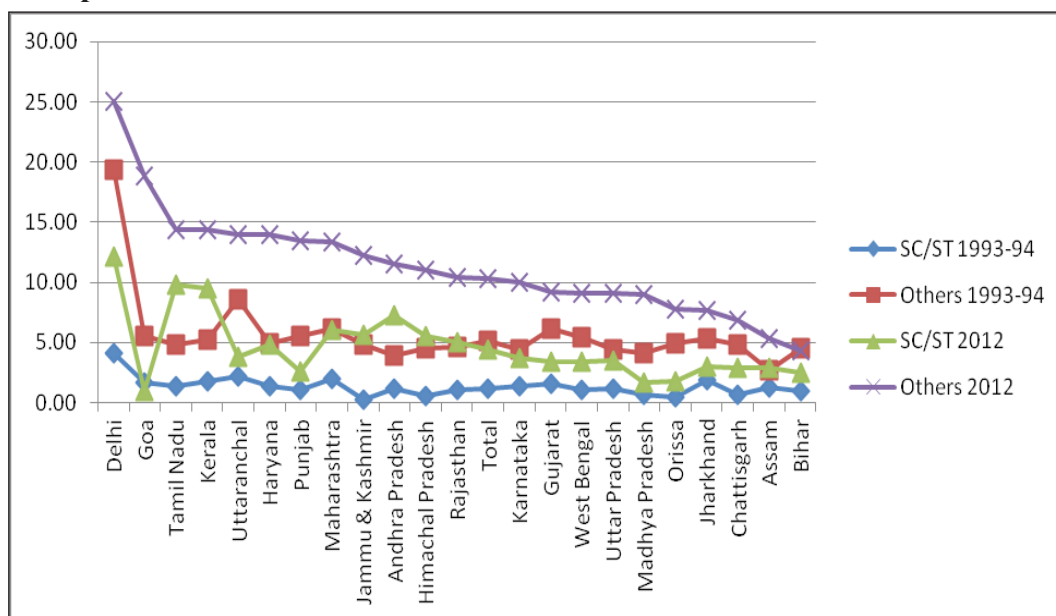


Fig. 6: Trends in Graduate and above Persons among Youth by Their Social Groups



Gender Parity

While the SCs and STs are very close to others in attaining gender parity in terms of net attendance in primary education, the issue still remains worrisome at the secondary level of education. Among SCs, there are 711 girls per 1000 boys attending secondary education, with this figure being higher than that for STs (623) and very close to the national average (732). In the sphere of tertiary education, the gender parity is very close (964 girls per 1000 boys). More interestingly, the ratio of SC girls enrolled in higher education is higher than that of boys (1114 girls per 1000 boys). This could be partly attributed to the scholarship scheme of the government. In the case of STs, however, the ratio is the lowest at 623. This could be because for them, the distance of the education facility from their places of residence poses a major hindrance, which discourages girls from continuing their higher education. Thus, the major concern for the new development paradigm is the need to universalise secondary education and improve its quality in order to ensure gender parity.

In brief, the educational levels of youth have improved significantly over the years. However, there persist significant differences in the educational development of youth across their gender, social groups and regions to which they belong. There are usual laggard states which also lag far behind in improving educational levels of their youth population. This is mainly due to lack of access to education institutions, poor economic conditions compelling a large number of youths to look for employment at very early stages of their educational development, poor quality of education that seriously affecting the employability of youth. Apart from this, there are evidences of discrimination in educational institutions which girls as well as Scheduled Caste suffer, leading to disinterest and drop out (IIDS, 2005).

UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG YOUTH AND THE CHALLENGE OF THEIR EMPLOYABILITY

About 9.14 million youths in India are unemployed, representing 84.7 per cent of the entire unemployed population in the country in 2011-12. The number of unemployed youths in the country swelled from 5.60 million in 1993-94 to 7.9 million in 2004-05, and further to 9.14 million in 2011-12, increasing at the rate of 2.75 per cent annually during the entire reference period. The incidence of unemployment is almost three times higher (6.2 per cent) among youths as compared to adults (2.2 per cent). Gender-wise, the rate of unemployment is higher among young females particularly in the urban areas (14.1 per cent) as compared to young males (8.25 per cent). The corresponding figure for rural areas is about 5 per cent each for males and females. The rate of unemployment among the youth increased steadily from nearly 4 per cent in 1993-94 to 5.4 per cent in 2004-05, and to 6.2 per cent by 2011-12 (Table 5).

Mismatch between Education and Employability

Over 67.6 per cent of unemployed youth possess secondary and above education. Youths having graduate degree including technical and professional educational attainments suffer with the highest incidence of unemployment as about 20 per cent among them were unemployed in 2011-12. The next highest incidence of unemployment is among those having diploma level professional and technical education (Table 6).

Table 6: Education-Specific Unemployment Rates Among Youths

Education Levels	1993-94	2004-05	2011-12
Illiterate	0.59	1.02	1.72
Up to Primary Level	2.00	2.79	3.03
Up to Middle level	5.93	4.70	4.47
Up to High School and Higher Secondary Level	11.85	10.34	7.40
Diploma and Certificate	21.21	20.11	15.98
Graduate and above	23.82	21.45	19.86
Technical degree	7.69	18.21	20.79
Diploma Not Equivalent to a Degree	22.57	19.95	18.20
Diploma Equivalent to a Degree	23.75	20.17	17.03
Total	3.98	5.44	6.23

Female youth with higher level of education suffer with high incidence of unemployment as compared to their male counterparts. For example, about 26 per cent female youth with graduate and above education were unemployed as compared to 17.4 per cent of their male counterparts in 2011-12 (Mamgain and Tiwari, 2015). Reasons for such high incidence of unemployment among young females include responsibilities of home care economy, limited mobility due to various socio-economic constraints and prevalence of gender discrimination in recruitment and wages (IHD-ISLE 2014).

Similarly, the rate of unemployment among graduate youths varies from a highest 32.9 percent in case of OCs to 19.3 per cent in case of OBC-Others. As regards the youth who have acquired diploma level education (below the graduate level), incidence of unemployment among the SC, OBC-Others and ST youths is much higher as compared to OCs (Table 7). It appears that the acquisition of degree level technical education has significantly improved the employability of youths in the categories of SCs, OBC-Muslims and OBC-Others, as compared STs, OC-Muslims and 'OCs'. This is possibly due to the implementation of the reservation policy in public employment and also the incidence of a growing number of SC and Muslim youth taking up private sector regular salaried jobs.

As regards the changes in the incidence of unemployment over the years, it increased substantially among illiterate and less educated youth during the period 1993-94 to 2011-12, but decreased significantly in the case of those having attained higher levels of education, barring those with technical degrees (Table 6). In fact, the unemployment rate among graduates with technical degrees jumped from 7.7 per cent in 1993-94 to 18.2 per cent in 2004-05, and increased further to nearly 21 per cent in 2011-12. The rate of decline in the incidence of unemployment has been substantive (ranging from 2 to 3 percentage points) for those with technical diplomas and high school graduates.

Table 7: Unemployment Rates Among Youth By Their Social Groups, 2011-12

Education Level	STs	SCs	OBC- Mus- lims	OBC- Others	OC- Mus- lims	OCs
Illiterate	0.62	1.98	3.62	1.46	2.61	1.18
Primary	0.97	4.12	3.70	1.73	5.32	4.22
Middle	3.06	4.56	5.68	4.12	9.18	3.82
High school and higher secondary	12.10	6.84	10.16	5.87	11.03	7.37
Diploma & Certificate	14.34	20.43	9.86	20.09	11.47	10.11
Graduate & above	24.73	22.92	25.93	19.29	32.95	17.54
Technical degree	33.03	15.08	21.82	18.71	39.32	21.44
Diploma not equivalent to degree	20.47	23.87	16.62	20.55	13.62	13.33
Diploma equivalent to degree	11.50	8.33	20.87	14.37	12.50	20.54
Total	4.11	5.62	6.36	5.61	8.29	8.49

Regional Trends in Incidence of Unemployment among Educated Youth

How the incidence of unemployment varies across the India states and that particularly for SC/STs? A highest 29 per cent of educated youth in Assam and another 28 per cent in Kerala were unemployed in 2011-12. In contrast, Gujarat has a lowest rate of unemployment among its educated youth (2.6 per cent). Gujarat has consistently low rate of unemployment as compared to most of the states since 1993-94. This shows the success of Gujarat's industrialisation in creating employment opportunities since early 1990s. Other states such as Bihar, Orissa, Jharkhand and West Bengal also face comparatively much higher incidence of unemployment than the national average of 11.5 per cent. Notably, these states not only have comparatively very low percentage of educated among their youths, but also lag behind in their industrial development and, thus, creating employment opportunities. Such states have a double challenge of not only to improve the educational levels of their youths but also have to create employment for them on a large scale.

Unemployment rate for educated SC/ST youth is marginally high than other social groups. However, in at least ten among 21 states they suffer with proportionately higher incidence of unemployment. Surprisingly, in states like Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Chhattisgarh and West Bengal, unemployment rate among educated SC/ST youth is significantly lower than others. The possible explanations for this situation is very low proportion of educated young women among SC/ST as compared to others, thereby keeping the overall rate of unemployment among such educated youth low in these states.

As seen earlier, unemployment rates among educated youth tended to decline over the period 1993-94 to 2011-12. This trend has been observed in all states except Uttarakhand, Assam, Jammu & Kashmir and Uttar Pradesh during the period 2004-05 to 2011-12. Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh witnessed a marginal decline in unemployment.

In case of SC/ST youth, rate of unemployment also tended to decline in all states except Uttarakhand, Jharkhand, Bihar, Assam and Karnataka. States like Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Delhi, Tamil Nadu, Orissa, Maharashtra and Kerala experienced a decline of over five percentage points in the rate of youth unemployment among SC/ST between 2004-05/2011-12. Notably, in these nine states the decline in youth unemployment rate has been rather lower for youth from other social groups as compared to SC/STs (Table 8).

While looking at the growth rates in absolute numbers of unemployed youth, their number increased by nearly 3 per cent per annum between 1993-94/2004-05, and thereafter decelerated significantly to about 0.3 per cent per annum between 2004-05/2011-12. This means that employment opportunities for educated youth significantly improved along with their sizeable transition in favour of education since early 1990s. However, this pattern significantly varies across the states. There are at least a dozen states where growth in the number of unemployed youth increased between 2 to 8 per cent annually during the recent period 2004-05/2011-12, and these growth rates were higher than the previous period, 1993-94/2004-05. Most prominent among such states are Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Andhra Pradesh. Contrary to these states, the number of educated youth unemployed declined in absolute terms significantly in states, namely, Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Kerala, Gujarat, Orissa and to some extent Delhi during the period 2004-05/2011-12. Notably, these states except Orissa are relatively developed ones, thereby implying that growth helps in giving jobs to youth and also make it possible to drive them for higher education by opting out of the labour market.

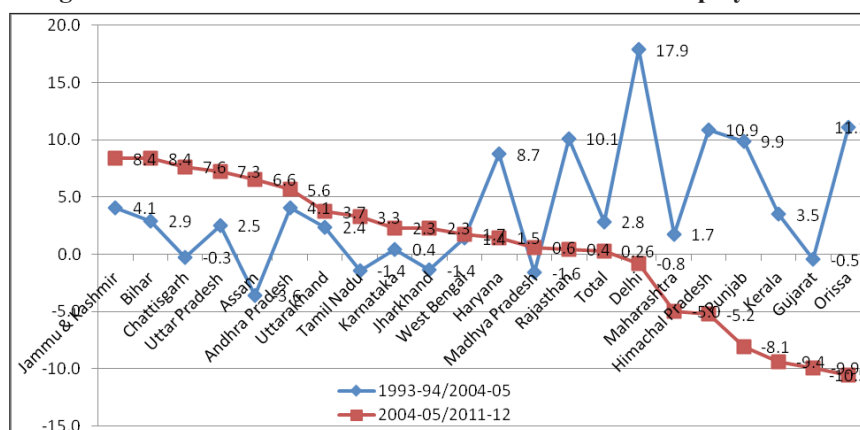
Table 8: Unemployment Rate among Educated Youth (Secondary and above)

	1993-94			2004-05			2011-12		
State	SC/ST	Others	Total	SC/ST	Others	Total	SC/ST	Others	Total
Andhra Pradesh	14.06	12.89	13.05	17.10	12.14	13.01	7.85	13.85	12.65
Assam	43.74	42.88	43.02	21.28	27.86	26.44	34.41	27.06	28.88
Bihar	13.20	18.05	17.50	10.88	15.75	15.07	35.58	10.61	13.76
Chhattisgarh	14.45	18.12	17.11	8.49	11.74	10.62	4.59	13.54	10.05
Delhi	0.00	4.17	3.87	19.15	17.61	17.75	12.07	11.42	11.57
Gujarat	11.13	6.93	7.70	3.81	4.89	4.67	4.42	2.07	2.58
Haryana	12.05	10.15	10.32	14.45	12.83	13.04	14.41	10.51	11.00
Himachal Pradesh	5.47	5.38	5.39	13.21	6.62	8.30	1.74	7.36	5.52
Jammu & Kashmir	15.78	14.02	14.31	12.76	15.53	15.18	7.80	18.83	16.66
Jharkhand	29.80	30.23	30.15	12.77	18.58	17.15	21.68	14.67	17.22
Karnataka	13.21	12.55	12.64	7.45	10.08	9.65	10.00	7.42	7.78
Kerala	43.00	39.49	39.70	37.32	40.11	39.86	30.01	27.20	27.49
Madhya Pradesh	16.21	14.36	14.72	7.94	8.35	8.30	4.29	8.50	7.50
Maharashtra	15.95	12.08	12.45	12.71	7.47	8.39	6.42	5.49	5.67
Orissa	14.46	28.29	25.81	23.99	35.20	32.55	17.38	14.50	15.35
Punjab	8.74	11.74	11.25	21.73	17.80	18.93	8.23	9.02	8.81
Rajasthan	13.54	5.57	6.63	11.73	8.00	8.78	8.75	7.53	7.81
Tamil Nadu	23.97	17.18	18.23	18.08	12.27	13.18	11.68	12.09	12.00
Uttar Pradesh	5.13	7.83	7.50	6.53	5.19	5.34	4.70	10.42	9.37
Uttarakhand	10.05	17.80	16.66	5.83	10.85	10.09	26.00	15.71	17.19
West Bengal	24.85	28.84	28.22	17.64	21.16	20.40	13.45	17.43	16.54
Total	16.11	15.87	15.91	14.58	13.55	13.73	12.02	11.30	11.45

In brief, the overall employability of youths has declined over the years, which is largely due to the rising incidence of unemployment among youths with education levels up to or below middle school. The reduction in unemployment rates among those with educational levels up to secondary school and higher except graduates with technical degrees largely confirms that an improvement in the education levels of youths has led to a concomitant improvement in their employability since early 1990s. However, the prevalence of a high rate of unemployment among graduates and technical degree-/diploma-holders is still a matter of concern. This also justifies the concerns of employers regarding the poor education and skill levels of youths passing out of higher and technical educational institutions. There is a huge disconnect between the theoretical learning and practical knowledge being imparted in educational institutions. Moreover, the mushrooming growth of technical education institutions during the last two decades has grossly undermined the quality of vocational and technical education in the country. As a result, the demand for degree level technical education offered by private institutions has significantly reduced as evidenced in a sizeable number of seats remaining vacant therein in recent years. Many private institutions offering degree level technical education are now also offering diploma level education. The

demand for such diploma level courses is increasing as industry is getting technically qualified undergraduates at comparatively low salaries. The emphasis of Prime Minister Narendra Modi on imparting skills among Indian youths for helping them improve their employment prospects, coupled with the current initiatives under the National Skill Development Mission, should ensure that the gap between current education levels and needs of the industry is bridged by ensuring both the quality and the relevance of technical education in the country.

Fig. 7: State-wise Annual Growth in the Number of Unemployed Youth



HOW HAVE MDGs MAINSTREAMED THE DISCOURSE AND POLICIES OF GOVERNMENT?

The Indian development strategy has been guided by its Constitutional principles of providing equal opportunities for decent living to all its citizens. The initial phase of development planning focused on increasing economic growth for creating employment opportunities and facilitating the eradication of poverty. This focus continued during each Plan period with a plethora of interventions over the years. The Constitutional safeguards for SCs and STs for promoting educational and employment opportunities were also earmarked by special component plans for their development. Under the special component plan, budgetary allocations of the Central Government are earmarked in proportion to the SC and ST population. However, the experiences of development interventions have been mixed. The budgetary provisions for the development of SCs/STs proved to be notional in many cases, while in other cases, these were spent on other uses that were not directly related to their development.² The development disparities between various social groups and regions in the country have widened over the years. The Government is now increasingly being challenged on its actions to promote development.

It is difficult to assess how the MDG framework led to a change in the policies and programmes of national governments due to the paucity of research.³ The Indian Government's commitment towards achieving the MDGs in a time-bound manner can be seen in the form of its renewed commitment to the development of its people as enshrined in its Constitution. It embraced the MDG framework and adopted the National Development Goals (2005) to correspond with the global development targets. The MDGs were also mentioned in the National Common Minimum Programme—the governance charter of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) that formed the Government at the Centre in 2004. India has initiated a number of development interventions, many of which were already ongoing for a long time, with the increased allocation of resources

and change in the priorities. The Indian Government initiated two major ambitious programmes, viz. the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) and the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) during this period to provide income and health security to its people. The launch of National Livelihood Mission (NLM) to create sustainable livelihoods in a mission mode for eradicating poverty at a faster pace was also influenced by the country's past experience in the spheres of employment and income generation. The Right to Information (RTI) Act is a landmark constitutional safeguard towards making governance transparent and accountable.

The 86th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2002, made elementary education a fundamental right for children in the age group of 6-14 years. With the aim of realising the right, the Government launched the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) (Education for All) in 2003 in order to achieve universal primary education in a time-bound manner. The National Programme for Education of Girls for Elementary Education was also launched in 2003 as an integral component of the SSA, with the objective of promoting gender parity. Subsequently, the concept of the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya was initiated in 2004 to create residential schools at the upper primary level for girls belonging to the marginalised communities for the purpose of promoting education among girls belonging to these communities in the educationally backward blocks. The enactment of the Right to Education (RTE) Act later in 2009 was a path-breaking legislation, as a result of which the Government is committed to initiate interventions, schemes and programmes for the development of quality education at the primary and upper primary levels of education. The Government's renewed focus on ICDS and MDM also signifies its guided efforts to reduce malnutrition and improve child health and education in accordance with the MDGs. The Government's strategies for promoting socially inclusive growth since the implementation of the Eleventh Plan and its decision to continue with the same strategy in the Twelfth Plan are also being seen as major initiatives for ensuring widespread development, as articulated in the MDGs too.

How have these initiatives led to an improvement in the attainment of the MDGs? As discussed in the previous section in this paper, there has been a definite improvement in the efforts made towards achieving these goals in terms of the decline in poverty, increase in enrolment, reduction in drop-out rates, higher transition to secondary and tertiary education, and an increase in the number of institutional child deliveries and public healthcare facilities. However, this progress has not taken place at the same pace for different social groups and across regions. The expansion of programmes relating to education and healthcare has, in many cases, occurred at the cost of quality. The steep increase in inequality across social groups and regions is a testimony of the fact that development interventions have not benefited the marginalised groups and lagging regions at the desired rate. The major challenge which looms before the Government is weak monitoring and the inadequate evaluation of public service delivery and development projects. Despite a significant rise in the voices of CSOs demanding development for STs/SCs within a rights framework and engagement in the development discourse by various government agencies, a general apathy still persists in the delivery of services. The political will and mindset of service providers is now being increasingly questioned to make development pro-poor and non-discriminatory. The challenge, therefore, is to spell out the effective development strategies and policies for making growth pro-poor and non-discriminatory. There is a crucial need for strong political will supported by effective governance in order to ensure the rights of the people as enshrined in the Constitution. The core issue of making governance pro-poor is yet to emerge in a true sense, which would facilitate the overall development of the marginalised groups at a rapid pace.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

To conclude, while the educational development of youth in India has been improving over the years, it yet remains less than desired as compared to many developing as well as developed countries. Despite a faster pace of convergence in the literacy rates of youths across their gender and social groups, SC/ST youth lag far behind in their educational development as compared to other social groups. Much of the deficits on the front of educational development are due to discontinuation of a large chunk of youths after their primary schooling, primarily due to poor economic conditions and other backbreaking household chores. This is more so in poorer states. Thus, a major challenge is to improve the educational development of youths. Since education significantly enhances the probability of getting better jobs, efforts need to be made to ensure the higher transition of youths to vocational and technical education, and also to higher education. Although the measures towards educational development of SCs/STs such as the grant of scholarships and free uniforms, provision of coaching for competitive examinations, and imposition of reservation in educational institutions have improved their participation in education at various levels, these need to be scaled up and strengthened further. An alarming aspect is the increasing deficit of quality education and skill training. Public educational institutions, at both the school and higher levels need to be strengthened and made accountable for their quality and relevance. Private educational and training institutions also need to be monitored closely for the quality of teaching they offer, and their fee structures. The current measures of skill development under the National Skill Development Mission need to be pegged up in a big way in order to address the skill shortages being faced by the Indian industry. Unlike in the past, today's youths are more informed and keen to be a part of the IT revolution. They are justifiably asserting their concerns for a decent and dignified life. Politicians and policy-makers must, therefore, come forward in a big way to facilitate the overall development of youths in the country and to ensure decent employment opportunities for them.

Persistence of unemployment among youth may lead to conflicts also (Carmer 2010; Planning Commission, 2008). The challenge, therefore, is to create a large number of remunerative employment opportunities with adequate social security for both youths as well as others in the coming years. Various policies and programmes for creating employment opportunities have less than desired impact on ameliorating unemployment situation among youths. This calls for measures to increase investment in the labour-intensive sectors, especially in the industrially backward and remote areas, which include measures for easy to do business, infrastructure development, safety, good governance, and sound corporate social responsibilities and ethical practices on the part of industry. It is thus imperative to intensify policy initiatives to promote enterprise development, particularly among SCs/STs, in a big way. As most of the new employment on offer is contractual by nature without any social security and low levels of wages, the employers of such labour need to realise that such practices would not help them in long term to improve their growth and competitiveness. These measures would definitely help India attaining its target of SDGs by 2030.

Notes

- 1 We consider the population aged 15-29 years as youth for our analysis in the present paper. Many programmes of the Government of India aimed at youth also cover the age-group of 15-29 years.
- 2 CBGA-NCDHR (2011), op.cit.
- 3 Duncan Green, Stephen Hale and Mathew Lockwood (2012), "How can a Post- 2015 Drive Real Change: The Political Economy of Global Commitments", *Oxfam Discussion Papers*, October, UK.

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Annexure

Table 1: Regional Pattern in Educational Development among Youth by Their Social Group

1993-94	Illiterate			Secondary and above			Graduate & above		
States	SC/ST	Others	Total	SC/ST	Others	Total	SC/ST	Others	Total
Andhra Pradesh	61.61	41.47	45.92	10.24	22.06	19.45	1.22	3.94	3.33
Assam	24.68	22.95	23.32	17.93	24.22	22.86	1.30	2.75	2.44
Bihar	73.69	45.51	51.77	9.15	22.79	19.76	1.01	4.54	3.76
Chhattisgarh	63.98	28.59	45.85	8.28	27.69	18.23	0.62	4.84	2.78
Delhi	42.77	15.84	21.16	13.62	56.17	47.75	4.12	19.32	16.31
Goa	23.82	7.82	9.32	36.05	49.47	48.21	1.71	5.51	5.16
Gujarat	41.57	23.01	27.84	17.12	32.48	28.48	1.62	6.14	4.96
Haryana	49.47	25.37	31.17	13.86	36.14	30.77	1.40	4.89	4.05
Himachal Pradesh	25.13	14.26	16.93	18.09	34.94	30.80	0.61	4.57	3.60
Jammu & Kashmir	38.99	20.89	26.05	13.39	32.83	27.30	0.27	4.84	3.54
Jharkhand	67.59	40.42	51.56	10.37	26.82	20.07	1.91	5.32	3.92
Karnataka	54.58	31.01	36.18	15.78	29.49	26.48	1.34	4.45	3.76
Kerala	5.27	1.72	2.05	21.58	40.11	38.39	1.80	5.22	4.90
Madhya Pradesh	62.83	36.57	46.14	8.28	23.21	17.77	0.70	4.10	2.86
Maharashtra	37.92	18.63	21.84	16.72	33.50	30.71	2.00	6.11	5.42
Orissa	63.34	27.00	41.48	6.46	23.11	16.47	0.47	4.98	3.18
Punjab	45.88	17.53	26.98	15.27	41.83	32.98	1.12	5.52	4.05
Rajasthan	64.96	42.45	49.04	6.66	19.33	15.62	1.08	4.62	3.58
Tamil Nadu	37.78	19.41	23.58	16.42	29.80	26.76	1.39	4.83	4.05
Uttar Pradesh	62.86	40.09	45.05	9.07	22.88	19.87	1.15	4.43	3.72
Uttaranchal	35.49	22.80	25.79	14.89	33.66	29.24	2.14	8.60	7.08
West Bengal	44.04	24.36	30.70	7.75	21.25	16.91	1.03	5.43	4.01
Total	52.79	29.58	35.55	11.51	27.59	23.45	1.22	5.10	4.10

Contd.

2004-05	Illiterate			Educated			Graduate & above		
States	SC/ST	Others	Total	SC/ST	Others	Total	SC/ST	Others	Total
Andhra Pradesh	39.10	25.84	29.14	26.71	34.63	32.67	4.16	6.77	6.12
Assam	12.82	15.47	14.75	18.58	26.31	24.20	1.31	3.80	3.12
Bihar	58.36	33.58	39.40	11.73	24.53	21.52	1.52	3.21	2.81
Chhattisgarh	28.01	14.57	20.61	14.97	28.41	22.37	2.17	7.34	5.01
Delhi	14.73	6.81	8.90	27.68	60.51	51.85	3.63	18.98	14.93
Goa	8.30	3.28	3.96	27.79	61.05	56.52	3.68	12.63	11.41
Gujarat	24.66	13.11	15.92	24.32	39.80	36.04	3.16	8.39	7.12
Haryana	27.02	12.02	15.55	21.45	48.54	42.17	2.31	9.09	7.49
Himachal Pradesh	9.95	5.39	6.87	36.23	53.35	47.78	4.49	7.18	6.30
Jammu & Kashmir	15.22	21.26	20.41	24.75	35.86	34.31	0.89	4.54	4.03
Jharkhand	42.20	22.65	30.02	11.73	29.42	22.75	1.34	6.93	4.83
Karnataka	29.12	15.91	19.10	22.04	38.92	34.85	1.78	5.86	4.87
Kerala	4.93	1.02	1.52	34.32	54.14	51.61	2.71	7.71	7.07
Madhya Pradesh	43.39	20.12	27.98	7.72	30.53	22.83	0.97	7.40	5.23
Maharashtra	18.26	7.22	9.98	31.10	44.94	41.48	4.79	8.56	7.62
Orissa	42.71	13.86	25.81	11.20	31.99	23.38	1.77	7.36	5.04
Punjab	22.49	10.20	14.92	29.90	55.36	45.58	1.72	9.42	6.46
Rajasthan	45.96	29.13	34.79	12.55	25.10	20.88	2.63	4.57	3.92
Tamilnadu	12.78	6.63	7.95	34.48	44.20	42.11	4.30	9.39	8.30
Uttar Pradesh	41.80	29.22	32.04	13.33	29.19	25.63	2.28	6.64	5.66
Uttaranchal	20.52	11.72	13.87	22.67	45.75	40.12	4.37	10.47	8.98
West Bengal	27.75	16.19	19.83	15.16	27.37	23.53	2.05	6.35	5.00
Total	32.21	18.53	22.29	19.40	35.64	31.17	2.59	7.09	5.85

Contd.

2011-12	Illiterate			Educated			Graduate & above		
States	SC/ST	Others	Total	SC/ST	Others	Total	SC/ST	Others	Total
Andhra Pradesh	21.30	10.58	13.40	41.76	59.57	54.89	7.30	11.58	10.46
Assam	6.19	7.55	7.20	36.74	38.56	38.09	2.92	5.31	4.69
Bihar	42.54	21.10	24.98	17.64	36.45	33.05	2.46	4.37	4.03
Chhattisgarh	12.57	7.83	10.01	30.02	40.05	35.43	2.95	6.82	5.04
Delhi	7.57	4.85	5.53	56.31	68.70	65.60	12.18	25.08	21.85
Goa	0.73	4.63	4.09	58.52	76.82	74.31	0.92	18.87	16.41
Gujarat	16.32	6.46	8.92	33.85	45.23	42.40	3.41	9.24	7.79
Haryana	9.91	7.01	7.64	36.43	65.13	58.85	4.88	13.98	11.99
Himachal Pradesh	3.94	1.84	2.52	58.61	71.77	67.50	5.50	11.03	9.24
Jammu & Kashmir	14.58	8.88	10.09	41.20	54.41	51.61	5.64	12.21	10.82
Jharkhand	26.42	19.43	22.15	28.76	43.41	37.72	3.04	7.63	5.85
Karnataka	15.08	6.54	8.61	36.67	62.08	55.93	3.77	10.00	8.50
Kerala	0.99	0.32	0.39	63.88	71.25	70.52	9.55	14.42	13.93
Madhya Pradesh	25.85	9.38	15.78	19.13	43.85	34.25	1.71	8.98	6.16
Maharashtra	9.46	3.35	4.82	45.63	62.28	58.28	6.01	13.41	11.63
Orissa	23.86	7.34	14.48	17.62	43.69	32.43	1.77	7.78	5.19
Punjab	16.19	4.05	8.67	34.63	65.97	54.05	2.57	13.50	9.34
Rajasthan	30.80	16.23	21.12	23.27	43.01	36.38	5.04	10.42	8.61
Tamilnadu	4.97	2.50	3.06	55.06	64.66	62.47	9.84	14.42	13.38
Uttar Pradesh	22.85	19.60	20.40	26.87	40.84	37.43	3.55	9.07	7.72
Uttaranchal	6.30	4.96	5.25	50.24	58.51	56.70	3.83	14.01	11.79
West Bengal	15.04	10.41	11.89	23.02	36.98	32.52	3.44	9.14	7.31
Total	19.01	10.88	13.15	31.89	50.02	44.96	4.38	10.28	8.63