

Transforming the Bangladesh National Youth Policy 2017 into Action Plan: What Do the Youth Want?

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Abstract

Like all other countries, youth in Bangladesh requires both a primary human resource for development and key agents for social change, economic development, and technological innovation. In order to use its full potentials, Bangladesh requires the need to implement the National Youth Policy 2017. The first step of this should be to transfer the youth policy into an action plan. The policy and the action plan can be used as an instrument to empower youth only if transferring the policy into action ensures the priorities of the youth. Based on a mixed-method approach using a survey done among 846 youth and qualitative data collection using FGD and KIIs from all eight-division headquarters, this study focuses on youth's expectations to translate National Youth Policy 2017 into an action plan. The paper is divided into several sections; in the first section, we have discussed the study's rationale, the second section deals with the methodology, the third section focuses on the critical findings, and the last section briefly states vital recommendations based on the study findings.

JEL Classification O15 · P36 · Y20

Keywords: Youth · Policy · Youth Action Plan

1. Introduction

1.1 Study background

The UN General Assembly proceeded with the "World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond". It recommended National Youth Policies for

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the member states, recognising that "young people in all countries are both a major human resource for development and key agents for social change, economic development and technological innovation" and "how the policy addresses the challenges and potentials of young people will influence current social and economic conditions and the well-being and livelihood of future generations" (UN, 1996). As the majority of the population consists of young people who are full of potential, the need for a National Youth Policy cannot be denied (UNESCO 2014 & UN 2018). An actual condition of effective youth policy is the involvement of children and adolescents in all decisions relevant to them. However, they will not commit themselves unless they are convinced that their involvement affects their future and what they decide today will concern their essential life circumstances tomorrow.¹ Therefore, youth participation should be a guiding principle of youth policies at all levels, not just the national level.² Participation promotes the well-being and development of young people. The more opportunities a young person has for meaningful participation, the more experienced and competent he or she becomes. It allows more effective participation, which in turn enhances development'.³

Transferring the youth policy into an action plan is crucial to fulfilling the expectations of the youth in ensuring the development of a country from every aspect.⁴ Young people apprehend the newest knowledge, generate new ideas and endow the courage to explore beyond the age-old traditional norms and practices (Crowley and Moxon, 2017). Youth are thus full of potentials and possibilities to initiate change in any society (UNESCO 200). The number of youth in any country is of prime significance, as currently, young people represent a majority of the population in most developing countries, which are going through the phase of demographic dividend.⁵ Hence, every step taken by the youth and every step

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- 1 European Commission (2001): Study on the State of Young People and National Youth Policy in Europe. Part I (Executive Summary), IARD.
 - 2 Government of South Australia (2000): Youth Participation Handbook: A Guide for Organisations seeking to involve Young People on Boards and Committees.
 - 3 Rajani, R. (2000, UNICEF): Discussion Paper for Partners on promoting Strategic Adolescent Participation, quoted in Lansdown, G. (2001): Global Priorities for Youth. Youth Participation in Decision-making.
 - 4 For a detail discussion see Commonwealth Secretariat 1998, Council of Europe 1997, 2002, 2003, European Commission (IARD) 2001, Government of South Australia Office of Employment and Youth 2000, ICNYP 2002, Lansdown 2001, Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie 1999, Sayfuddin 2001, Tolman 2001, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific 1999, UNESCO 2004
 - 5 See UN 2005 and 2009, Lee and Mason, 2006, Lin 2012, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2014, UNFPA 2014

taken for them needs to include a youth perspective to ensure the benefits of such a demographic dividend. The way young people are engaged today will determine the prospects for the future (UNESCO 2014). Though young people are prominent as "political actors, innovators, entrepreneurs and social workers", disproportionate social, economic and political barriers have been reported preventing them from revealing their full potential (ibid). Many young people across the globe are still experiencing "interlocked forms of discrimination, limited political inclusion, high levels of poverty, and limited access to health systems, educational opportunities and decent jobs" (World Youth Report UN 2003),

To utilise their full potential, young people need to be empowered. Achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development also requires the engagement of the youth as more than one-third of SDG targets reference young people explicitly or implicitly, with a focus on empowerment, participation and/or well-being (Hwang and Kim, 2017, Raikes et al. 2017, UNDP 2017 & UN 2018). Youth participation needs to be reflected at all levels of development which requires youth-friendly infrastructure, policies and patronisation of youth organisations (UNESCO, 2014). Considering the urgency, the Government of Bangladesh has initiated the National Youth Policy 2017. The policy can be used as an instrument to empower youth only if transferring the policy into action ensures the priorities of the youth (ibid). It is crucial as this can help develop a strong partnership between the young people and different stakeholders, including the government, while providing ownership of the whole process to the youth (Barua, 2016). Within the scope of this paper, we tried to understand the critical expectations of the youth in transferring the youth policy into an action plan. The paper is divided into several sections; in the first section, we discussed the study's rationale, the second section deals with the methodology, the third section focuses on the critical findings, and the last section briefly states critical recommendations based on the study findings.

1.2 Study rationale

The primary reason to explore the priorities of the youth for their development is that if Bangladesh wants to transfer the demographic dividend into the economic dividend, it requires a comprehensive youth development action plan. Youths' opinions about the priority areas for such an action plan can surely help policymakers make informed decisions. Bangladesh currently has massive scope for the demographic dividend (Roys and Kayes, 2016) with a potentially higher

share of workers than dependents, allowing for faster economic growth.⁶ The demographic dividend has been found as significant as it helped improve living standards of the population through increased: (i) Capital formation, (ii) Savings and investment, (iii) Female participation in the labour force, (iv) Improved quality of labour force, (v) Slowing unsustainable fractionating of holding and releasing the pressure of absorbing the growing labour force on limited agricultural land, and (vi) Increased demand for goods and services (Mazid, 2017).

The number of dependents per 100 working population has been declined from over 100 in 1961 to 60 in 2010, and the trend is continuing (ibid). Since 2007, Bangladesh has been reported to have more working-age people than non-working, known as the demographic dividend, and Bangladesh will enjoy this window of opportunity till 2040 (Liton & Molla, 2017). According to another study on Demographic Transition and Demographic Dividend in Bangladesh: 1950-2100, using the UN projections (2010 Revision), demographic dividend in Bangladesh started in 1980, according to the low variant, which will end in 2035 and according to the medium and high variants will end in 2040 (Mazid, 2017). Thus, Bangladesh has already passed three decades of demographic dividend, currently at the midway point of the dividend period when more than three decades pass on (ibid). According to the prediction of the International Population Conference, 2009, the countries in South Asia would acquire a demographic dividend for a period, on average, of 50 years. On average, Bangladesh would acquire the highest dividend among the countries, estimated at around 1.0 per cent from 1980 to 2020 (ibid). As transforming the demographic dividend into an economic dividend comes within a specific time frame, urgent intervention to utilise the dividend more efficiently is needed (Liton & Molla, 2017).

Currently, more than 65 per cent of the population belongs to working age, between 15 and 64 (ibid), and according to BBS (2015), one-third of the population is young, belonging to 18-35 years of age in Bangladesh. According to the national youth policy, the "youth" age is between 18 and 35, and almost 45 million people fall within that age range (Biswas, 2017). To utilise the demographic dividend at its most, countries have to plan for it when many are still

⁶ During the demographic transition, as in many countries, declining infant and child mortality helped to spark lower fertility, effectively leading to a temporary baby boom. As this cohort moves into working ages along with sharp declines in fertility, significant changes occur in a population's age structure. Mortality rates also decline followed by a fall in fertility rates. As a consequence of declining population growth, there is a bulge in working-age population and shrinking dependent population that can allow for faster rates of economic growth.

young before entering the workforce (Mazid, 2017). Failure to provide opportunities to the growing young population may result in rising unemployment, followed by "increased risk of social upheaval" (ibid). Therefore, to translate the opportunity of demographic dividend into a reality, strong collaboration among different stakeholders, including youth, guardians, policymakers, development partners and other social actors at all levels, is needed (Mazid, 2017). Undoubtedly, developing a comprehensive, well-thought, and widely consulted youth policy and National Action Plan can be the first step to achieve this.

2. Methodology

The study used a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative method used a structured survey questionnaire, while the qualitative methods included FGD and in-depth interviews. Total 24 FGDs and 24 IDIs were conducted in all of the divisional headquarters. While choosing the respondents for the FGDs, a male-only, a female-only and a mixed group were picked up purposively in all study locations. The respondents were from various economic and educational backgrounds. A balance was maintained between the 'marginalised' and 'mainstream' youth in all FGDs. From each of the FGDs, one respondent was recruited for an in-depth interview. All of the eight divisional headquarters were covered for the survey. Schools, colleges, universities, public places and households were targeted for the survey. As no clustered sampling was done, data collection was not confined to significantly of the concerned districts. A total of 846 valid responses comprising 423 males and an equal number of females were the sample of the survey. Three age groups were targeted for this research: 15-18, 19-24 and 25-35 years. From these samples, graduate students were the prominent group.

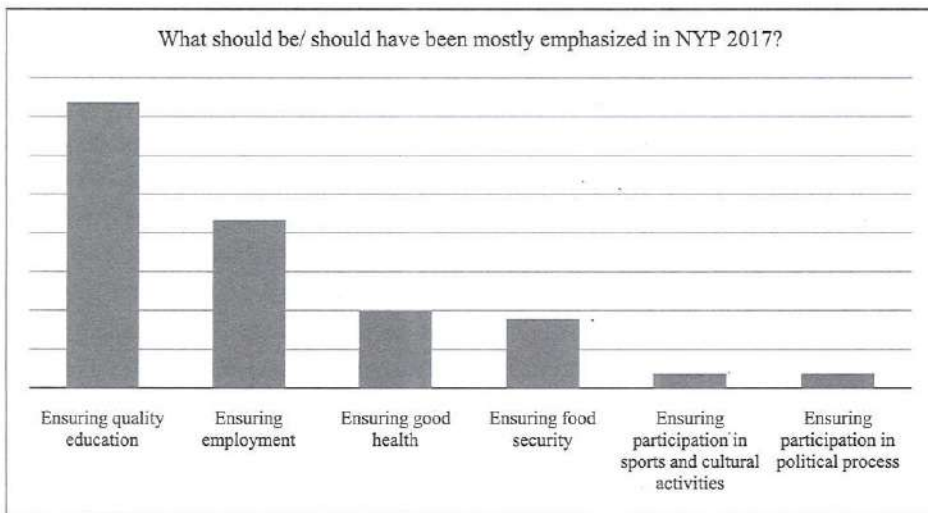
3. Key Findings

The key findings of the research range from considering the NYP 2017 as necessary to recommendations from the respondents regarding the NYP2017. Most of the youth thought that a National Youth Policy was important for Bangladesh. Around 60% of youth responded this way. Another 33% thinks that NYP is necessary for Bangladesh. on the other hand, 4.4% thinks it does not matter, and 2% answered unnecessarily. Only 17.8% of the respondents reported knowing about the policy, and the rest did not. Moreover, only 7.7% answered that they had read the policy.

3.1 Investing in quality education should be the ultimate priority

One of the prime priorities of young people regarding youth development was investing in quality education. Among the options: Ensuring quality education, ensuring employment, ensuring good health, ensuring food security, ensuring participation in sports and cultural activities, ensuring participation in the political process, ensuring safety from climate change risks, and Others; ensuring quality education was the most important one according to the youth. This option was selected by over 45% of the valid responses. Employment and health received 26 and 12 per cent responses accordingly.

Figure 1: Opinion regarding what should be/should have been primarily emphasised in NYP 2017



The development of ICT was regarded as the best strategy for ensuring quality education. It gained 37.5% response from a total of 819 valid respondents. Uniform education system, free education, science education, and district level universities gained 21, 10, 7 and 6%, respectively. Other options gained less than 5% response. For ensuring quality education, the young people also suggested some more recommendations during the qualitative study. The first of those was introducing a unitary education system merging all the prevalent mediums of education. Apart from them, they suggested that brilliant and qualified teachers at the very primary stages for ensuring quality education. Currently, the school teachers are paid the least, and the meritorious students become reluctant to join this noble profession. So, if we want to improve the quality of education, we need to recruit eligible teachers, offering them well-paid salary packages. The young people also claimed for fully subsidised education system up to university level.

As the youth said, the dropout rate is still high in our country, and consequently, many meritorious students stay out of education for being poor. The whole nation will suffer if we miss grasping their talent. Hence, we need to support them, and subsidised education can be an effective solution.

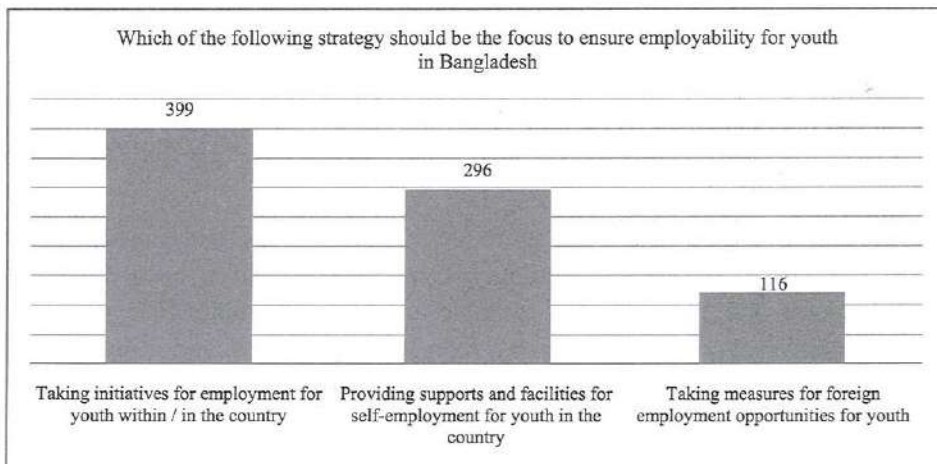
The young people also suggested lowering the cost of education in the private sector. Enhancing opportunities for vocational training in all branches/ forms of higher education was another priority of young people.

3.2 Generating Employment Opportunities for the youth within the country

While exploring youth's priority regarding employment opportunities, it was very encouraging to see that the majority of them emphasised creating jobs within the country rather than creating opportunities for jobs abroad. However, the largest cohort of youth, 399 respondents, consider private or public jobs within the country as the priority, while 296 and 116 respondents respectively opined that providing self-employment opportunities and measures for foreign employment opportunities should be the priority. Notably, Males voted significantly more for employment opportunities in the country, and females voted more for providing support and facilities for self-employment.

Figure 2: Opinion regarding the key strategies to ensure employability for youth in Bangladesh

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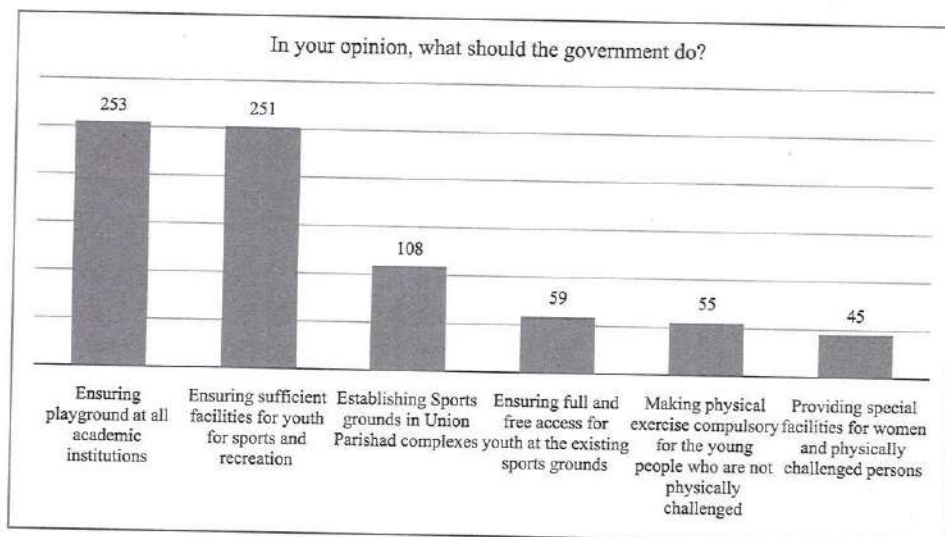
Around 34% of the youth prefer self-employment in the business sector while 30% and 25% prefer the agricultural sector and small and medium industries, respectively. This pattern is consistent with the youth's creative and disruptive

side. The lack of financial backing put the heavy industry in the last place as only 11% showed interest. In addition, the youth chose training as the number one priority for self-employment. Almost 40% of the respondents identified training as the main requirement for being self-employed. Then come capital, advice and other expertise. So, the youth regards technical knowledge and professionalism over financial backing and networks. Low-interest loan facilities and advises-suggestions were the other two significant expectations from the government. Considering the scarcity in the job sector, the youth from all the divisions demanded to generate more employment opportunities. Instead of intending to enter any particular sector, they claimed more scopes of jobs in both private and public sectors. While discussing current job scarcity, many young people also drew attention to the fact that many high-level jobs remain vacant due to a lack of native eligible people. In many corporate houses, RMG factories, and other relevant sectors, the highest positions are occupied by foreign talents. Hence there remain scopes for strengthening our youth with more skills and capacities to mitigate the problem of unemployment recruiting our country people in the topmost positions. In this regard, the young people are recommended for advanced training on skill development, capacity building and leadership. They claimed for low-cost training and well-organised training institution. The youth are enthusiastic about exploring innovative ideas for initiating ventures but opined that easy access to credit like soft loans and collateral-free loans. Some young people mentioned allowance for the unemployed. Though it has already been initiated, they claimed for effective activation and more extensive coverage.

3.3 Equitable sports and recreation facilities should be ensured

The youth prioritised sports facilities and institutional integration. Their priority is sports and recreational facility and connected to it is the second option: playgrounds at educational institutes. Male respondents opted for sports facilities, playgrounds and Union Parishad sports complexes. On the other hand, females opted for female facilities accordingly. Regarding the government's input to ensure sports and recreation of suitable quality, the youth first prioritised playgrounds in school colleges, sports- recreational facilities, and sports grounds at Union Parishads. Free access, compulsory system and facilities for women-physically challenged were not chosen that much. Sports facilities and playgrounds at educational institutes made up 65% of the total responses showing the depth of this necessity. The young people focused on equitable facilities to minimise the gaps between rural and urban, rich and poor and most importantly, the gender gaps.

Figure 3: Opinion regarding the most important factors for sports and recreation of youth



3.4 Political inclusion of the youth must be assured at all levels

Today's youth recommended for political inclusion of them to be assured at all levels. They have their own perspectives to join politics. They are aware that today's politics is very much polluted with corruption and the culture of terrorism, the youth feel the urgency to eradicate those from being within the structure, and hence they claim for the involvement of youth. They want to obtain the leadership position through politics to heal the social problems with their ideas, strength and licit means. To ensure a youth-friendly political atmosphere, they need structural changes to allocate minimum representation of the youth at all levels of the political system. The young people repeatedly pointed out that if we declare ourselves a democratic state, we first need to ensure freedom of speech, which fell under threat many times. So, it is alarming for us to upheaval from this condition. As soon as the freedom of speech is liberated, the young people from both inside and outside political parties will participate actively and effectively.

3.5 Balancing virtual and social life

One of the most striking and contemporary recommendations from the youth was to secure a balance between virtual and social life. In this era of digitalisation, there is no scope for avoiding ICT, social media, and virtual life. Most of our daily tasks have been digitalised, and initially, it was for easing our everyday struggles and connecting more people and building networks. The youth agreed that they have a broader network now than at any time before. They communicate with

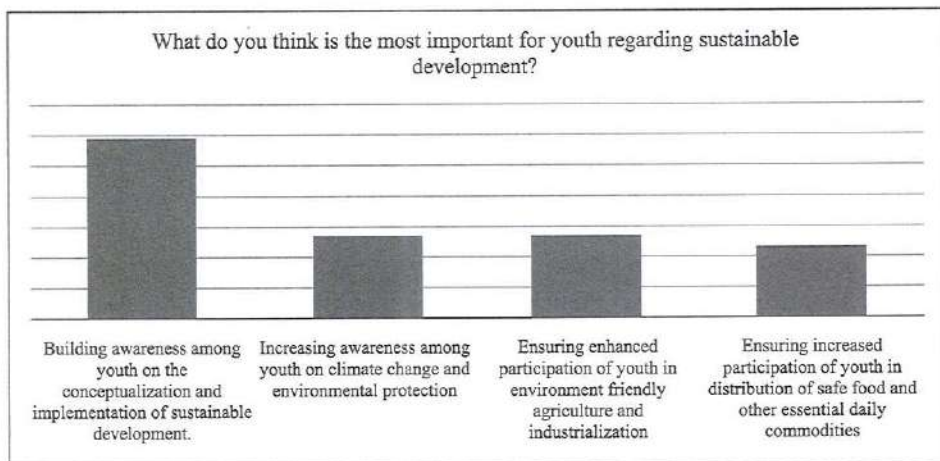
people of different levels, but genuinely feel they have somehow isolated from their own social life. All the bondages are built virtually, and behind that, they remain secluded.

Moreover, their crisis gets bitter when their guardians keep rebuking rather than cooperating with them. They feel the isolation, and at the same time, they do not find a way to get back to their social life. They urged for support from their parents and teachers, and they hoped for youth-friendly consultation and dialogues to balance social and virtual life. When others treated the youth as careless about social life, they pretended to value social life a lot. They want appreciation from there. Hence they want cooperation and proper guidance.

3.6 Eliminating drug addiction from society at any cost

For a long, many young people have been derailed by the addiction to the drug. The young people shared their experiences of being offered by drug dealers so shamelessly. The dealers are spreading their business under the shades of some political leaders, and thus they are remaining out of punishment. The youth urged for their punishment. Considering the present situation, there must be more rehabilitation centres. Effective consultation or psychotherapy need to be merged with that rehabilitation for a sustainable outcome. To prevent youth from drug addiction, all kinds of addictive drugs must be seized by the authority. According to the suggestion from the young people, specific authority can be introduced to monitor and control the selling and buying of drugs.

Figure 4 : Opinion regarding sustainable development



3.7 Ensuring Sustainable Development

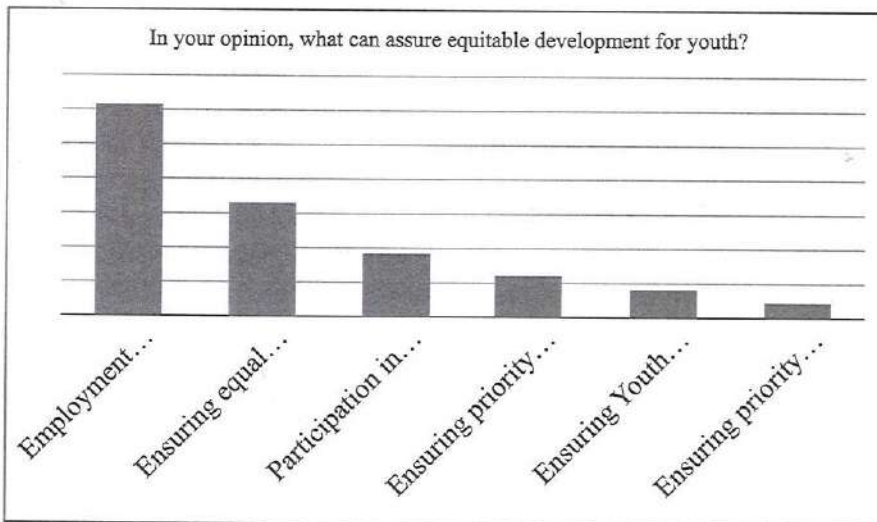
Awareness of sustainable development is still a significant factor in sustainable development. Climate change has been included in the curricula for many years, but sustainable development is still introduced. Campaigns and events are thought of less importance in this scenario.

There were regional priorities that young people from Khulna demanded food security and safe drinking water. The community people from the Khulna division have to lead tough life. They are more prone to natural disasters, are more prone to saline water, and suffer a lot to get sweet water. Due to the prevalence of shrimp cultivation, the existing sources of sweet waters are also being polluted. The young people from Khulna drew attention to these facts and demanded to ensure food security and safe drinking water.

3.8 Ensuring Equitable Development and Equal Opportunities for Women\ Female youth\ and Girls

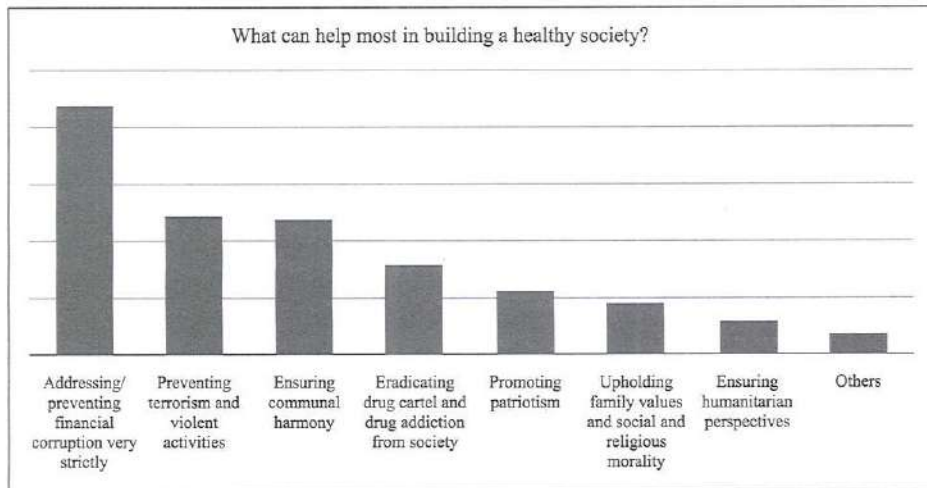
For equitable development for youth, 45% of the youth consider Employment facilities and working environment most important. They were followed by equal opportunity and participation in power structure and politics.

Figure 5: Opinion regarding what can assure equitable development for youth



32% of respondents chose to address financial corruption as the first priority. Then comes antiterrorism (18%) and communal harmony (17.5%). Other options included anti-drug steps, patriotism, values and humanitarian perspective establishment.

Figure 6: Opinion regarding what can help most in building a healthy society



Today's young people seem to be more aware of the equal rights of men and women. They demanded support at the family level as well as social level. They offered themselves to fight against the social taboos towards gender equality but wanted appreciation from others. Many young people focused that if the boys learn to treat girls as their equal companions, they will be grown up keeping such behaviours and attitudes. Unless we intervene in the first stage of their lives, we will fail to bring effective changes.

3.9 Addressing Special Needs of Marginalized Youth

To build an inclusive society, the youth are interested in working for marginalised groups like ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, Adivasis, transgender people and people with Different Sexual Orientations and Gender identity. Moreover, surprisingly, they are also interested in entering such professions where they would have the scope of working for people who have been stigmatised for a long. They mentioned that there are mostly NGOs working for marginalised people, but if there were more patronisation from the government, it would be easier for them to gain social acceptance. Hence, they also demanded inclusive policies and mechanisms. Again, in this issue, they suggested intervention through the academic curriculum. The young people also stated that if we want to empower the marginalised people, sensitivity towards them would only be halfway, we need to provide them with education, and initially, we need a particular educational program for them. Furthermore, there must be provisions to involve them in income-generating activities; the government can start with their

quotas. The young people urged that if developing Human Resources is our prime concern, there is no way to build an inclusive society.

3.10 Ensuring Youth-friendly Health Facilities

Health requirements were analysed, and it was seen that most of the respondents wanted low cost/subsidised healthcare the most and then mental health, management and women-friendly environment were prioritised. 'Special needs' services were the least required. It seems that cost is the most critical factor for health services. It can be caused by the perception of the high cost of health care. Then, mental health facilities, gender neutrality and mismanagement are considered. This shows that there have been improvements in these areas.

The young people demanded youth-friendly health services, particularly for SRHR, which is still beyond the mainstream priorities. Both the adolescent and young men and women have queries regarding their sexual and reproductive health, which are not appropriately addressed by the family, teachers or even by the health service providers. They face troubles if they need to seek medical assistance regarding SRHR. Social taboos still prevail that unmarried people do not need to know much about these issues, but the reality is that they may have critical issues that should be considered, and it is their right to know about these. Unless they remain unaware of these, that may lead to confusion, dilemma and inappropriate decisions. Hence, a favourable and youth-friendly environment is needed so that young people can get their queries heard and answered.

The concern for Mental Health is still new to us. Developing special arrangements for psychological counselling is a burning need of the youth, proven through the reported cases of depression suicides. People nowadays are going through a very stressful life and they are really struggling to balance their responsibilities, relations and their own expectations. Consequently, they are falling deep in depression and in the worst cases going to commit suicide finding no other way. Hence, developing special arrangements for psychological counselling to prevent frustration and suicide is very much urgent. The young people suggested immediate initiatives regarding this.

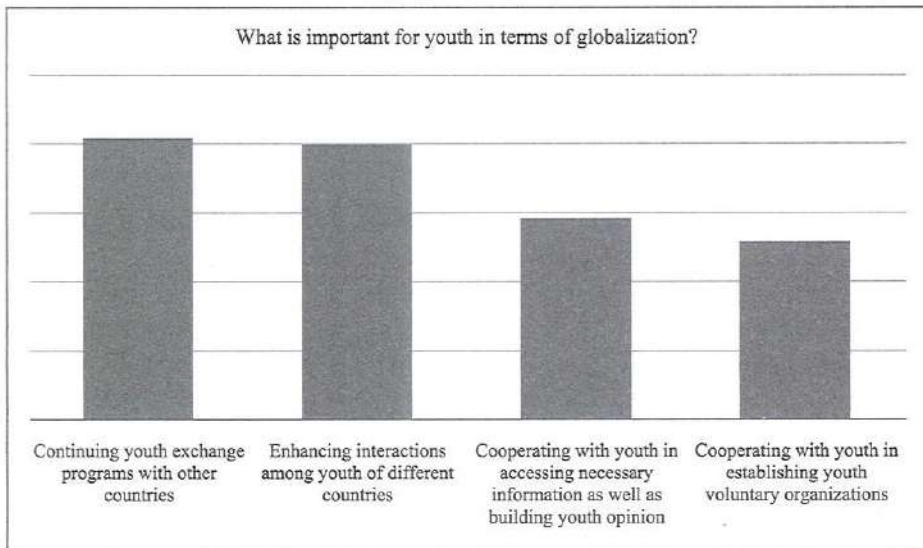
3.11 Globalisation

Globalisation aspects such as exchange programs, youth interactions among different countries, information sharing, and voluntary organisations were examined for their importance to youth society. Among the options, exchange programs were the most important, with a 30% response. Interactions with youth communities of other cultures are also similarly meaningful (29.5%). Among the other two options, voluntary organisations were thought to be the least important.

3.12 Providing Budget for Quality Research on Youth

The young people demanded to provide budgets for students and teachers at universities to conduct research on youth and organise regular learning sharing events involving youth. Regarding census and research, the Youth development index is the most important according to the youth.

Figure 7: Opinion regarding what is important for youth in terms of globalisation



4. Conclusions and Recommendations

Youth has always been a symbol of power and prosperity in human history. In the history of Bangladesh, youth has always played a crucial role in the social, political and development processes. Unfortunately, even though the country is now halfway to enjoying the demographic dividend, a comprehensive youth development action plan is yet to be made. In this regard, the present study gives an overall idea of the areas in which young people want to see immediate action. While doing this, the study also tries to identify specific recommendations that should be prioritised in the youth development action plan. The summary of these recommendations are stated below:

Throughout the discussions with the youth, the concern for quality education was the prime priority, and the youth recommended particular areas to be improved. They claimed for unitary education system merging all the categories like Bangla Medium, English Medium, Madrasa. When our urge to build an independent nation was to establish democracy, so many categorisations in basic

education were a sheer threat to it. Such a system not only prevails different ideologies among the students but also leads to broader discrepancies ranging from economic discrimination to social isolation to some extent. So, when we look forward to building an equitable society, the unitary education system must be in place.

To ensure quality education, we must involve qualified mentors, and we need to do whatever it needs. Firstly, we must admit that we still lack in offering attractive salary packages for the talented students we want to be involved in teaching. If we reform the salary structure, if the government invests more in it, the talented youth will join teaching at the very primary and secondary stages to foster quality education. At the same time, it would be a successful measure by the government to mitigate the unemployment problem. To encourage higher education, our government can subsidise education up to university as suggested by the youth. To minimise discrepancies and harmonise public and private education, the cost of the private universities must be consistent with that of public universities. When the students of private universities belong to well-off families, there are cases when many of them have to struggle a lot to manage the cost of not being able to get admitted at public universities. All such discrepancies must be abolished through proper intervention. If we do not count vocational education with due respect, many youths with vocational skills will remain unrecognised. Hence, there is no other way of patronising vocational education to ensure quality education and develop human resources. The youth being in the non-formal sector must be brought under the formal education system to extend the coverage. Initially, they need particular measures considering their present involvement in non-formal works. Mobile learning centres can be an option in this regard.

Providing sufficient job opportunities to the youth is the prior condition to produce economic dividend from the demographic dividend in every circumstance. Moreover, generating diversified jobs is the most effective way to do it. More job opportunities need to be created within the country. To minimise the pressure on the government jobs, there need more job positions and at the same time more scopes for the private sector. The young people have their innovative ideas, business plans and entrepreneurship skills and networks. The only thing they need is a youth-friendly environment that their ideas are appreciated. To make informed decisions, either in private/governmental jobs or entrepreneurship, the youth needs information, knowledge, skills and capacities. Moreover, hence a current and higher level of training opportunities must be open for the youth. In addition, this training should be accessible at a reasonable cost.

When young people are rich in modern ideas, the main hindrance towards taking any initiative is lack of money. Considering the strength of the youth, the government may arrange soft or collateral-free loans, particularly for the youth who may apply through their eligibility and plans instead of capital. Youth want sufficient and equitable arrangements for recreation and sports. They recommended different ideas to ensure inclusive measures for all the young people irrespective of gender, race, and physical condition throughout the country. Playground at every academic institution is of significant significance for youth for their sports and recreation purposes. There is an utmost demand from the youth for assurance of playground and recreation facilities at every academic institution from primary school to university in urban and rural settings.

In Bangladesh, Union Parishad (UP) is the most localised governing structure in the prevailing political system. So, the local government can quickly establish sports and recreation facilities at the UP complex. That will ensure more accessible facilities for youth for recreation and sports within their locality. Sports and recreation facilities should be women-friendly so that female youth and girls can participate without any hesitation and hindrances. Women friendly environment in sports can indeed lead to more and more achievements of female youth and girls. Around ten per cent (10%) of the total population in a given country are somehow challenged and developmentally disabled (physically-mentally) persons [World Health Organization]. So, it is imperative to adopt inclusionary measures for challenged persons to participate in sports and recreation activities. Many developing countries are setting an example of particular sports arrangements for physically challenged people. Undoubtedly Bangladesh is also taking special measures in different sectors, but there are still more scopes of improvement in sports and recreation. Like all other sectors of the country, corruption expanded in sports management as well. Corruption in sports associations takes various forms of nepotism, abuse, financial misappropriation, misconduct, sexual harassment. Youth recommended for complete eradication of all forms of corruption in sports association to encourage the genuinely talented and devoted sports persons. Youth identified tangible and sensitive discriminations in sports which are based on rural-urban identity. Addressing rural-urban discrimination in sports is highly important.

Youths need representation at all levels of the political system and decision-making structure. They deserve freedom of speech for nurturing democratic values and culture. In order to ensure a balanced society, it requires the representation of youth at all levels of the existing political system and decision-making process. A quota system can be introduced for nominating youth

candidates from all political parties in all forms of political contest. Youth need freedom of speech for nurturing democratic values. Political torture, extra-judicial killing and other threatening mechanisms might discourage youth from expressing their thoughts and demands. Youth should be accommodated in social services and civic activities to increase their participation and contribution everywhere. Increased youth participation in various social services and civic activities will make them more responsible and sensitised towards others. Youths have already proved their commitment towards others through initiating different movements. Such courageous steps by the youth must be appreciated, and more platforms need to be created for social activities by the youth. Youth should be added to different peace-promoting events to consolidate harmony and stability within society and the state. Youth can contribute a lot to preventing extremism and intolerance. Bangladesh is currently a country in transition in terms of economic indicators. In such a situation, the youth of the country should be brought forward to help eradicate poverty.

The promotion of ICT and awareness of opposing sides are equally important for youth. Measures should be taken to reinforce their real social life. Besides, restoring their family ties is also very important. In the contemporary age of ICT, the promotion of ICT for youth is essential. At the same time, building awareness on the wrong sides of ICT facilities is strongly recommended for youth.

ICT provides youth with a worldwide virtual society where any user lives a charming netizen life. At one stage, they feel boredom, frustration and disappointment. So, steps should be taken to reinforce and sustain the real social life of youth. Because of the attraction to virtual life, youth gradually create distance from parents and family members. Youth cannot find confidence in a fragile family bond. So, the necessary steps should be taken in order to restore and strengthen family ties for youth. There should be a balance between virtual-identity based life and family attachments for youth. Educating and admiring such a balance between ICT knowledge and family attachment can guarantee a useful virtual life along with healthy family life.

Drug cartels and supply networks must be abolished. In addition, proper rehabilitation and effective prevention mechanisms should be provided. Strict legislative measures and impartial implementation are also critical. All types of drug cartels, drug supply syndicates, and small and individual drug business networks must be eliminated at any cost. Most of the addicted persons are youth in terms of age group. Required actions must be taken for proper rehabilitation for already addicted people, especially youth. Often, in rehabilitation centres, youth get introduced to more dangerous drugs. So, a supervision mechanism must

be there in order to ensure check-and-balance in rehabilitation centres. Youth are most vulnerable to becoming victims of drug addiction. Prevention mechanisms should be everywhere, from family to the workplace; from school to university. Strict prohibition of drugs and other addiction materials can play an essential role in controlling drug addiction.

Youth should be assured of safe drinking water in salinity-prone areas. They should be assured of food-commodity safety as well. Besides, the significance of sustainable development must be recognised. Safe drinking water is just equal to life for those youth. Affordable, safe drinking water must be made available for the meaningful livelihood of youth. Nowadays, we often hear of arsenic contamination in food crops, melamine contamination in imported milk powder, and toxic chemicals in/on fruits. In such a situation, food security and food-commodity safety must be ensured. The significance of sustainable development must be acknowledged for the welfare purposes of youth. Strategies should be developed for youth to cope with climate change and global warming. Otherwise, a vast number of demographic dividends will remain lagged.

Equal support and opportunities for women, female youth and girls must be ensured for equitable development. It could be at the family level, at the society level, and state level. Besides, the behavioural approach and legal framework should conform with the principle of equal opportunities.

In Bangladesh, typically, a woman or a girl gets less support from the family. However, unfortunately, a man or boy gets much more support from the same family. That should be stopped. In a patriarchal society, women traditionally get limited support from the society level. As a consequence, women and girls get fewer opportunities from the society level for any initiative. Equal support and opportunities for women and girls at the society level must be ensured. In a family system and social system dominated by men, women are treated unequally in a state. Such inequality should be adequately addressed. As women and girls are not treated equally in almost every sphere, positive changes in the behavioural approach of all and legal frameworks should be introduced.

Many youths are somehow marginalised and underprivileged. For example, the youth of ethnic groups/ Adivasi; hijra, transgender and SOGI people; physically-mentally challenged persons; remote and rural areas. Righteous integration of all marginalised youth should be ensured. A significant number of youth of various ethnic groups/ advashi are somehow marginalised compared to Bengali youth. Righteous integration of youth of ethnic groups/ Adivasis must be ensured for effective and meaningful implementation of NYP. There are a small but negligible number of youths who are hijra, transgender and SOGI persons.

Righteous integration of hizra, transgender, and SOGI youth must be ensured for proper implementation of NYP. The number of physically-mentally challenged youth is constantly increasing. Alternatively, maybe, families are now admitting/recognising the very existence of physically-mentally challenged youth. However, they are not adequately integrated everywhere. So, righteous integration of physically-mentally challenged youth must be ensured. Youths in a large number are living in remote and far rural areas. They are just lagged in any consideration.

Moreover, lastly, many youths are a minority in terms of different indicators. Consequently, righteous integration of youth living in far rural and remote areas must be ensured in the implementation of NYP. Righteous integration of minority youth must be ensured.

SRHR facilities for youth must be ensured, and psychological counselling facilities must be arranged. Moreover, gender-neutral health facilities and a youth-friendly health management system should be created. Sometimes youth seriously feel that they need SRHR facilities. However, that many SRHR facilities are not available now. So, everywhere in the country, SRHR facilities for youth must be ensured. Expected/ demanded psychological counselling facilities are not available for youth. Psychological counselling facilities should be arranged and ensured for youth. Youth, specifically female youth and girls, often feel that gender-neutral health facilities are needed. In conformity with their expectation and needs, gender-neutral health facilities should be ensured. Whatever health facilities are available in Bangladesh that is not entirely youth-friendly, youth narrated. Youth want health management that will address and incorporate all needs and necessities of youth. So, a youth-friendly health management system should be created.

Globalisation renders many opportunity windows. Youth must be provided with opportunities for globalisation. International youth interactions and exchange programs should be facilitated. Updated knowledge from foreign countries should be available for youth. Moreover, youth should be trained for self-help and self-esteem. International youth interactions could be beneficial in this age of globalisation. So, international youth interactions must be encouraged. Youth exchange programs should be initiated. Youth exchange programs can enrich the knowledge, experience and skill of youth in both ways learning and disseminating. Youth should be provided with updated/ cutting-edge knowledge from foreign countries. Youth should be trained for confidence, self-help, and self-esteem. Then, the youth will emerge with leadership qualities. As a result, the entire society/ state will be the beneficiary.

There should be ample research on youth to identify their needs and recommend what to do for youth. So, a sufficient budget for quality research on youth should be allocated.

Budget/ funds should be allocated for students at universities to conduct diversified research on needs, expectations, and solutions. Funds should be available for faculty members/ professors at universities for quality research on youth.

Many independent/ freelancer researchers and experts are interested in researching youth. Budget/funds should be available for such researchers and experts to research findings on youth. NGOs can play a vital role by providing research initiatives on youth and their suggestions based on those researches. So, the budget should be allocated for NGOs for research on youth. Overall, regular learning sharing events must be organised for youth. That is how it is possible to nourish the efforts and initiatives for youth.

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