



## **TOWARDS FRAMING A YOUTH CHARTER: PRINCIPLES FOR RIGHTS OF YOUTH IN INDIA**

### **Principle: Non- Discrimination**

- a. No individual by virtue of his/ her religion, race, caste, sex, sexuality or place of birth shall face any discrimination from State or non- State actors.
- b. There will be an active discouragement of all forms of racial, religious and community profiling that prevents particular youth from accessing opportunities.
- c. Where necessary, affirmative action will be provided for youth that are victims of such systematic profiling.

### **Principle: Freedom of Expression and Action**

- a. Youth have the rights to express their opinions without fear, even then these opinions are at variance with those of their parents, families, communities and friends.
- b. All youth have a right to choose their own life partner, irrespective of the opinions and biases held by others in their close proximity.

### **Principle: Autonomy**

- a. All youth have the right to make decisions independent of opinions held by people around them, based on facts gleaned through processes of interaction with people around them.
- b. The ability of youth to live life with autonomy, to ensure that their decisions are based on their experiences and opinions.

### **Principle: Freedom of Association**

- a. In order to represent their own voices, it is necessary for youth to have their own associations that adequately represent their interests. These associations can include student unions, trade associations and other coalitions that represent the voices of youth.
- b. Youth need to be encouraged to form associations that represent their interests, especially for vulnerable youth including migrants, Dalits, minorities, women and others.

### **Principle: Freedom of Thought, Conscience and Religion**

- a. All youth should have the ability to make choices free from a pressure to think, act or behave in a way that conforms to a particular societies beliefs.
- b. All youth have a right to follow a religion of their choice.
- c. Youth should have a choice to not follow any religion or to define their own relationships with religion that are different from their parents and immediate social context.

**Principle: Protection of Private life**

- a. All individual enjoys full protection of their private life, allowing full protection of their privacy, place of residence and any attacks on their person or reputation.
- b. All individuals should have full protection of their choice of sexuality, sexual orientation and sexual expression.
- c. All individuals should have the right to explore different kinds of sexual and platonic relationships.

**Principle: Protection of the Family**

- a. No individual by virtue of his choice of life partner will be discriminated against or victimised by the State, communities or any other player. All individuals entering into a marriage shall do so based on their free consent and enjoy protection from the State.
- b. The State shall intervene where necessary to protect individuals and families against actions of khap panchayats and other community groups that seek to exercise control over the choice of the marriage partner of young people.
- c. A right to be protected by the family even when the youth's opinions are different from that of others in the family and community.

**Principle: Youth Participation**

- a. While youth are an increasing number in the population, their voices are not represented in the political and social spheres. Changing attitudes to ensure that the time of youth is NOW and not tomorrow, is an important right.
- b. Ensuring that youth are able to participate in decisions that affect them is also an important part of their rights. Increasing levels of political participation at local, state and national levels need to be an important policy focus.
- c. Ensuring that participation of youth leads to a more democratic and equitable society, free from the injustices that are present today.

**Principle: Education and Career Path**

- a. Every individual shall have a right to opportunity equalling education of good quality upto the age of 18.
- b. No individual shall be denied a right to education due to a lack of access to finances, resources or the need to support their families financially.
- c. The education of young people will be designed and directed to
  - a. Expanding their horizons and perspectives in addition to the gaining of knowledge and information
  - b. Providing access to a career path, rather than a job with little chance of personal growth and career expansion
  - c. Building individuals with a respect for a diversity of opinions as well as respect and tolerance towards other cultures, communities, castes, religions etc.
- d. All education shall be tied in with appropriate support, counselling and guidance for youth to develop a career path, built on the basis of their education and taken forward on the basis of their interests and strengths.

- e. Traditional forms of education and apprenticeship needs to be supported to ensure that all youth are able to access both formal education as well as traditional education.

**Principle: Health**

- a. Every young person shall have the right to enjoy the best attainable state of physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health.
- b. A key focus of the provision of health will be the equitable provision of health for all youth to ensure that all individuals have an opportunity to lead a complete and fulfilling life.
- c. Every young person should have the right to sexual education in order to make informed decisions regarding their own sexual choices.
- d. Every young person should have information on reproductive health, including sexual health that will allow them to make informed choices on the same. This includes access to contraceptives, antenatal and post natal services.
- e. Provide support for youth who have become victims to substance abuse and ensure that they have good facilities to both recover from the addiction as well as reintegrate into the mainstream.
- f. Provide support for youth to ensure an environment where mental health issues are dealt with, with an aim to reduce mental illness and deaths due to depression and suicides.

**Principle: Protection of Girls and Young Women**

- a. As young girls and young women are especially vulnerable, there need to be additional protections to ensure that they are not exploited in any way due to their vulnerability
- b. Young girls and women should be encouraged to follow their conscience without the pressure to conform to their parents desires or patriarchal community norms.

**Principle: Elimination of Harmful Social and Cultural Practices**

- a. Every young person shall enjoy the right to live a life free of all harmful social and cultural practices. These practices include honour killing, dowry harassment, sati and other practices that adversely affect young people
- b. The State shall actively discourage and eliminate all harmful social and cultural practices through both law enforcement and the education of people

**Principle: Prevention of Exploitation**

- a. Every young person has a right to be protected against exploitation by employers due to their relative lack of experience and weak bargaining power.
- b. This includes protection against payment of exploitative wages, delays in payments of wages, excessive overtime and any other exploitation due their weak bargaining position.
- c. Migrant youth should be protected especially as they have little power in a new location.
- d. The prevention of human and sexual trafficking to ensure that youth can lead a life of dignity, freed from the fear of exploitation.

**Principle: Safety**

- a. All individuals have a right to the protection of their lives.
- b. Youth living in abusive, exploitative or violent homes need special protections to ensure their physical and mental health is secured.
- c. All youth should be protected in public places to ensure that they are protected from physical and mental abuse that can be directed at them on the basis of their gender, ethnicity, caste, religion and other factors.