



PRESENTS

THE YOUTH MANIFESTO

AN INSIGHTS REPORT

July 2024



INTRODUCTION



Youth Ke Bol (YKB) is a one million-strong youth-led coalition in India, building the leadership of young people in the realm of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) towards enhancing their quality of life.

This initiative **aims to amplify youth voices** and break the silence on crucial topics including consent, contraception, and family planning. It also **explores the intersection of sexual and reproductive health and rights with education, employability, mental health, and climate change.**

"The Youth Manifesto" is a charter of demands outlining actionable steps that young people expect from various stakeholders to achieve an inclusive and informative understanding of their sexual and reproductive health and rights.

For young people, finding a safe space is challenging. We hope this manifesto **encourages conversations, creates safe spaces, and develops ecosystems** tailored to their needs.

METHODOLOGY

The **aim of this study** is to gain an understanding of the **linkages between young people's sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRH) and the four aspects of quality of life - education, employability, mental health, and climate change.**

"The Youth Manifesto" uses Quantitative and Qualitative methods for data collection and analysis in the form of **Survey Questionnaires and Focused Group Discussions** respectively.

The survey was conducted in pan-India with the majority of the participants of various genders, aged **18 to 29**, coming from **Maharashtra, Delhi, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Chhattisgarh, etc.**

The respondents were,

- Young people working professionally in full-time jobs (18%)
- Students working professionally in some capacity i.e. internships and part-time (23%)
- Students not working professionally in any capacity (58%).



METHODOLOGY



This manifesto is the product of responses from **36,530 respondents** across the 4 surveys and **82 participants** for the focused group discussions.

The research for this study is **designed and led by** Youth Ke Bol's Communications Hub **Yuva Originals Private Limited**.

"The Youth Manifesto" presents insights gathered from young people in the following order:

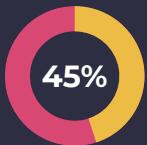
- Quality Education
- Employability
- Mental Health
- Climate Change

Quality Education

- Young people have noted that **young girls** from Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities of India often **drop out of school** at a young age due to **limited access to quality education and opportunities**.
- **Societal norms and pressures to prioritize early marriage** also play a significant role in this issue.

Empowering young women and challenging traditional gender roles can break the cycle of early marriages and pregnancies, granting them more control over their futures.

- Young women and queer people need **improved educational opportunities, safe spaces, and supportive societal stakeholders**.



45% young people believe that **access to quality education is important for their overall well-being and development**.



47% of **non-binary youth have felt discriminated against** in an educational setting because of their gender or sexual orientation.

Quality Education

- Participants in our focused group discussions recognized that **pornography** frequently serves as many young people's **first exposure to sex**.



Nearly 50% of female respondents think that a **lack of comprehensive sex education** (CSE) in schools/colleges can lead to **misconceptions, unsafe practices, or negative health outcomes in youth**.

There is an urgent need for structured sex education that clarifies misconceptions and offers accurate, age-appropriate information on relationships, consent, sexual health, and more.

- Young people suggest **inclusive sex education** would **normalize discussions on periods and contraception**, shifting societal mindsets.



65.9% of respondents are in **favor of including topics like contraception, safe sex, and consent in school and college curriculums**.



65% of young people feel that **parents and guardians also have an active role in providing SRHR education**.

Employability

- Young people have shared that women encounter **passive sexism** in various fields.



Nearly 50% of young women — either working full-time or part-time — said that **marriage or pregnancy does play a role in increasing discrimination in employability.**

Workplaces need improved policies and support systems to ensure equal opportunities and fair compensation for working women.

- Youth acknowledges the significance of **paid maternity leave**, especially in supporting single mothers and young couples.



Nearly 44% of youth think that **paid maternity leave should last between six months to a year.**



Out of this, **78% of males** working full-time or part-time **believe and resonate with the same.**

Employability

- Youth believes that workplaces should also be responsible for **supporting women and creating systems to ensure their growth.**



65% of men and women shared that **gender-sensitive hiring and promotion practices** are ways to improve job opportunities for young women and non-binary individuals.



83.28% of young women feel that providing **affordable & accessible childcare facilities** is another way to go about this.



48% of youth feel that offering **mentorship & skill development programs** is a great way to do the same.

Climate Change

- Young people see a **direct link between population growth and the worsening impact of climate change.**



Nearly 66% of young people believe that **changes in population size affect the climate.**

- This connection is further elucidated through the concept of **urbanization**, described as a process that "consumes" natural habitats to accommodate increasing human populations.

Urbanization often results from people seeking better economic opportunities, highlighting the need for effective government intervention and policies.

- The COVID-19 pandemic is a noteworthy example of **lack of equal resource distribution**, which resulted in increased migration and shifts in population density.



Nearly 61% believe **climate change disproportionately affects vulnerable populations' access to SRHR services.**

Climate Change

- In our discussions, young people highlighted some impacts of climate change on reproductive health including **reduced fertility, increased miscarriages, and false pregnancies.**



Nearly 62% of youth believe that **education** about climate change should include its **intersection with sexual and reproductive health and family planning.**

Understanding the link between resource distribution, migration, and healthcare access is crucial, as is taking action to address the gaps between them.

- This topic is seldom openly discussed, revealing **a gap in public dialogue** on these important interconnections.

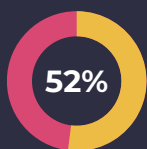


49% believe that **ensuring access to contraceptives** and family planning services in climate-affected areas is crucial.

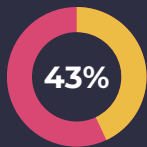
Mental Health & Well Being



- During our discussions, young people addressed the **stigma around seeking professional help and therapy** in India, noting that it is often perceived as a **sign of weakness** and remains a significant taboo.



52% of young people have experienced **feelings of depression or anxiety** at least at one point in their life.



Nearly 43% of youth are **uncomfortable sharing details** about relationships, sexual intimacy, STDs, pregnancy, etc, **with a therapist/healthcare provider.**

Mental health issues are a growing concern among young people, leading to an increasing demand for improved mental health services and facilities.

- Young people also noted that there is **limited awareness and understanding** of it within their communities.

Mental Health & Well Being



- Young people feel that the ability to **freely express one's identity** and make decisions about their body would **positively impact mental health**.



55% of young people surveyed said that they are **unable to make decisions regarding their sexual health and relationships**.

Queer young people need governmental policies and support systems to ensure they can exercise their basic fundamental rights.

- They emphasized that **women should have greater control over choice of contraception methods** due to the negative impact of it on physical and emotional well-being.



58.4% of young **queer** said that they **do not have full control over decisions about their sexuality, body, and choices**.



40% of them **do not have access to affordable and reliable contraception methods**.



CHARTER OF DEMANDS



- We want the freedom to **make informed choices** about our sexual and reproductive health — and less taboo on information surrounding it.
- We want more **affordable, accessible, and reliable contraception methods** which we believe are crucial for our well being.
- We want **quality sex education and safer spaces** to talk about sexuality and sex in educational institutions.
- We want **educational institutions to be more gender inclusive.**
- We want more **gender-inclusive workplaces** with **gender-sensitive hiring** and promotion practices to be the norm.



CHARTER OF DEMANDS



- We want more **affordable and accessible childcare facilities** to encourage women and non-binary folks to join the workforce.
- We want more robust **support systems** when it comes to **mental health**.
- We want **actionable steps on climate change and climate injustice**; especially for vulnerable communities.
- We want the intersection between **climate change and access to sexual and reproductive health services** to be recognized and **taught in educational institutions**.
- We want the cue for **how to talk about sexual and reproductive health to the youth to come from the youth**.

CONCLUSION

Our research concluded that young people have a strong grasp of concepts such as consent, healthy relationships, and contraception—key aspects of their sexual and reproductive health—and how these affect their quality of life - education, employability, mental health, and climate change.

They seek safe spaces—both within educational institutions and beyond—to continue these conversations and are advocating for inclusive workplaces and equal access to healthcare information and services for everyone.



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