

Evaluation of Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development (RGNIYD)

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Executive Summary

1. Terms of Reference

Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports has entrusted the task to IIPA (Indian Institute of Public Administration) to carry out the evaluation of RGNIYD (Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development) with the terms of references covering:

- a) The objectives for introducing the Scheme and whether the current programmes/ activities are in tune with these objectives? If not, what changes need to be made?
- b) The current administrative framework and whether it is appropriate considering the objectives and programmes of the Scheme? If not, what changes need to be made?
- c) Whether the objectives themselves need to undergo change in the light of changing environment and aspirations of the youth over the years? If so, what are the suggestions?
- d) Whether the Scheme is in a situation where it has completely achieved the objectives for which it was introduced and should therefore, be discontinued/ closed?
- e) Any other relevant aspect of the Scheme.

2. Methodology

IIPA had initial discussion in the Ministry on the subject to identify the key issues to be considered during the study. The ministry is particularly concerned about the value addition on the subject from the Institute as a knowledge centre of Government of India,

awareness promotion among youth about their potential role in the socio-economic development of country, capacity building in terms of their ability to perform better and contribute more productivity in the employment and income generation social cohesiveness.

Subsequently, contacts were established with the Institute particularly the newly appointed Director of the Institute to finalise our preliminary visit. However, due to exams to be held in February 2020, it was decided to visit RGNIYD in the month of March. The March visit was also postponed due to Corona outbreak. Yet, a set of data sheets/questionnaires were mailed to the Institute to furnish the requisite information. The Institute has e-mailed us the information available. Due to extended lockdown in Tamil Nadu it was decided to hold virtual meetings with faculty, students and staff. The three meetings and several meetings with the Director enabled us to process the information as per objectives of the study.

3. Overview of the Scheme

3.1. Youth Development

The Youth represent the most dynamic and vibrant segment of the population. India is perhaps the most youthful country in the World, with about 65% of the populace under 35 years old. As per the National Youth Policy 2014, persons falling in the age group of 15-29 are considered as youth.¹ The youth in the age group of 15-29 years comprise 27.5% of the population. As per the United Nations (UN) population prospects, the youth population (15-29 years) globally stands at 1.8billion in 2020. Out of the total youth in the world, every fifth resides (20 percent) in India (366 million) reflecting the importance of this segment of people in the country. It makes it significant that energies of this group of population are channelized appropriately to accomplish the objectives of country as well as expanding the GDP. This requires interventions in the areas of the education, skills, health and other enablers, which equip the youths to face the challenges.

¹ UN adopted the age – group 15 to 24 years for defining youth. The National Youth Policy 2003 kept the age group 13-35 years for defining youth

3.2. Projection of Youth Population

It is evident that, 50.1% of the population in the country, was aged 24 years and below in 2011, constituting 30.8 percent and 19.3 percent in the ages 0-14 years and 15-24 years respectively. The combined proportion of these two age-groups is expected to fall from 50.1 percent in 2011 to 34.7 percent in 2036. The average age of Indians is expected to be of 34.7 years in 2036 as compared to 24.9 years in 2011.

3.3. Creation of RGNIYD

The need to establish a national level training institute was considered imperative to bring under one umbrella all youth development activities viz., training, research, extension, documentation and dissemination. Thus, germinated the idea of premier national level apex Institute i.e. Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development (RGNIYD). A variety of establishments were at that point occupied in training the functionaries of National Service Scheme (1969), Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (1972) and other organisations involved in youth development. Accordingly, RGNIYD was established in 1993.

4. Organisational Structure

Hon'ble President of India is the Visitor of the Institute. The multifarious activities of the Institute are monitored by the statutory bodies viz. Executive Council, Academic Council, Finance Committee and the Building and Works Committee. The Director is the Chief Executive Officer who is responsible for the day-to-day functioning of the Institute through various Schools, Departments and Centres.

4.1. Staff

As per information provided by RGNIYD there are 2 Professors, 4 Associate Professors and 9 Assistant Professors. The turnover of such employees is extremely high. It influences the exercises of the Department. If, we see Department-wise quality, there are a few offices which don't have any employee.

4.2. Budgetary allocation and expenditure pattern of the scheme

It tends to be seen that the Institute could spend more when required. Nonetheless, the Ministry authorities called attention to that the Institute can't go through the cash, what is given to it. The investigation group felt that if the Institute could not utilise the grant during the reference period due to several reasons. Although, it would absolutely require more when the extent of exercises is extended. This needs a revision of manpower deployment, programme implementation and feedback.

5. Findings

5.1. Niche Area

The niche area of institute is education, research, training and advisory services and networking with the collaborating entities. Interactions revealed that the Institute is planning for starting many new academic programmes. We also need to decide what we expect from the Institute, which should be in terms of furthering ministry's plan and mandate. The study team's considered opinion is that the Institute should focus on programmes carrying forward the agenda of the Ministry.

5.2. Workload

The distribution of work load appears to be tilted towards education- teaching the students, the younger set of youth clientele. The Institute conducts six post-graduate courses. Most of the faculty time is spent on teaching, leaving a little for a wider agenda of the institute.

5.3. Cliental

Expansion of activities to a cross-section of clientele in the age group of 15 to 29 appears to be lower than expected. Many areas such as skill development and exchange of experience are missing. This could be interstate, intra-state and inter-country exchange of experiences.

Clientele is also limited to students largely from a few states. There is a need to identify a typology of clientele and potential areas of intervention.

Interaction with the students revealed that the students are coming from few geographical areas only. Less awareness about the Institute and its mandate may be the reason behind low enrolment in the Institute from other parts of the country. There are only three exam centres outside – Chandigarh, Kerala and Guwahati, for entrance test for admissions.

5.4. Faculty

The faculty development appears to be fairly inadequate. At present the institute has 15 faculty members whereas as per UGC norms the need of 42 for teaching assignments only. As per a moderate estimate for the current activities the institute needs 13 additional faculty on priority basis.

Faculty development is equally important in terms of exposure, research, exchange programmes etc. they should be able to participate in the events/workshops. At the same time, it was heartening to note that steps are being taken for faculty development. Three workshops were held for teachers on research related topic, which is important for generating knowledge. It may be attributed to the appointment of a full-time director who can plan for the future.

Faculty members expressed the need for more researches, which may be funded by the Institute itself.

5.5. Academic Collaboration

Academic collaboration of the institute is fairly limited. Academic collaboration and search for partners is also the need of hour. There are several stakeholders within and outside government who can join hands to develop synergy and convergence. They need to be brought in the venture of RGNIYD. Inter-state and inter-university expansion of collaboration is minimal.

Infrastructure at the fairly large campus is highly underutilized as per potential there is a need to expedite professional activities other than teaching. Conferences, Roundtable meets, workshops, seminars etc. should be organised round the year.

5.6. Performance

The institute, therefore, is operating at level lower than expectation. Yet, the potential and scope are fairly high. In fact, the Institute may leverage the fact that it is the only institute of its kind in the entire South-Asia, as revealed by a faculty member, and may plan for developing youth development programmes for the neighbouring countries, especially the south- Asian countries.

A Coordination Committee has been set up at the instance of RGNIYD, in the Ministry in 2019 for effective implementation and monitoring of the training programmes conducted for NYKS and NSS functionaries. The draft Annual Action Plan for the same was shared with the two agencies. It seems the training calendar proposed by RGNIYD was in principle acceptable to both except some operational issues.

The positive aspect is that a regular Director has joined to lead the team RGNIYD. The follow-up activities are promising. Future plan of the Institute is being discussed with the ministry.

6. Recommendations

- (i) One of the mandates of the RGNIYD is to act as a think tank and provide policy inputs. There are many issues afflicting the youth in the country today. As the size of this segment of the population is large, so are the number of issues, which are diverse in view of the size of the country. This provides immense opportunities for action research which may result into generation of knowledge and subsequently effective policy inputs.
- (ii) Advisory services of the Institute are utilized in a very limited manner by the Government of India and particularly the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports only. There is a wider scope to expand advisory services to Government of India and other stakeholders. Training also does not seem to have taken a due place in the activity profile of the Institute. It should flow from research and advisory services. Further, multi-dimensional aspects of training such as workshops, seminars, Round Tables, Regional and local outdoor events should also be taken up.

In this regard, Institute can also extend services to other ministries of Govt. of India (Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Rural Development, Panchayat Raj etc.) and states.

- (iii) Besides that, there are many international commitments, which the Government of India being a signatory needs to implement. Many of these concern youth too. For example, the Government of India is a signatory to the commitment of implementing SDGs. UN has identified eight goals out of seventeen where youth's engagement is needed. UN has strategized it too. As the nodal Ministry, the Department of Youth Affairs, in a proactive approach needs to find the actions to operationalize them. For this the Ministry may seek policy inputs from the RGNIYD.
- (iv) Some of the research publications and training/ workshop done by RGNIYD fall in this realm. The Ministry may request the Institute to scale it up and suggest operationalization strategy for the same.
- (v) As the country is diverse, the issues concerning youths differ from state to state and region to region. The strategy to engage youths in the context of socio-economic situation of that state and ways to be operationalize may need focused attention. The states on their own may not have either the capacity or the resource to work on them. In such a situation, the Ministry may mandate the institute to engage with each state separately to handhold them and undertake activities which are suitable in that particular state's context.
- (vi) The modality for such an activity can be based on what Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India is doing. It has four centres in different parts of the country including the IIPA, which are funded by it, just like Department of Youth Affairs funds RGNIYD. It has assigned each centre a group of states, thus covering all the states and distributed them among the five centres. One faculty member has been assigned by each centre to engage with them to do the researches and assess their capacity building needs and as a follow up undertake those activities. The study team would like to highlight that the capacity building is much more than mere training.

- (vii) The expansion of capacity building should include documentation of case studies, P2P learning, Exchange visits, development of material in local language. It should be done in a participatory manner involving a range of concerned stakeholders including CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) from private sector.
- (viii) Thus, each faculty member in the RGNIYD may be assigned a number of states for handholding and carrying out necessary activities. It is important to mention here that some of the faculty members have engaged with some state governments to frame their youth policy and related activities. However, this may be needed for covering all the states, especially in view of the eight SDGs that in any way are being implemented by the states.
- (ix) This will also benefit in knowledge formation. One of the mandates of the institute is to act as a repository of knowledge, but for that knowledge needs to be formed. Engaging with all the states and subsequent researches and other activities would provide a lot of information. This will help the Ministry also in focusing on youths and in fact much more strategically saving time and resources as the specific issues would be known to it for all the states/regions. The knowledge thus formed should be helpful for the National Resource Centre (NRC) at the Institute. The NRC then may engage with concerned departments to make its best use. In the process, the NRC would be much more vibrant and useful in the development.
- (x) The institute is currently running post-graduate programmes. The academic programmes help create a pool of cadre of professionals who can carry forward the agenda of the Ministry.
- (xi) During discussions, the study team was told that the Institute is planning to start some more post-graduate programmes. Analyzing the intake, enrolment and post course completion prospects the study team is of the opinion that such courses should be selected with great care and caution. Such courses need to conform to the agenda of the Ministry. Otherwise, for normal academic courses, Ministry of

Human Resource Development and now Ministry of Education has been taking care of the need the students for education.

- (xii) It is considered opinion of the study team that a committee be set up to examine the course content of each programme and their suitability for the agenda of the Ministry. This committee may consist of experts on youth affairs outside the government, the offices of the Ministry, faculty members and the Director of RGNIYD. The Ministry may also think of incorporating one or two international experts, as it has become easier now the availability of the technology. COVID-19 pandemic has shown that distances are no longer a constraint. However, there needs to be a five-frame for this committee to give its recommendations so that the Director who has the responsibility of implementing the decisions gets sufficient time for implementation, as the Director has a three-year term.
- (xiii) The Ministry may also need to play a more active role in bringing the Institute and NSS and NYKs together on one platform and make the Institute the nodal agency for capacity development related activities concerning the two. Similarly, in deciding to launch a new course by the Institute, the views of NSS and NYKs may also be taken about what kind of trained manpower is required by them. It will also help the students completing the course, as they will get opportunity to work for what they have trained. This is also important from the point of view that all the three entities are supposed to carry forward the agenda of the Ministry and synergy among the three is necessary for this.
- (xiv) This is being suggested to ensure that the institute fulfils the mandate of the Ministry and does not turn out to be one of the innumerable universities offering general courses. It should take a lead role to enhance development on youth issues across the educational institutions.
- (xv) In this context, the study team would also like to mention that for many courses, the institute may collaborate with universities/institutes across the country to run short term courses, offering diplomas or certificates as per the need of the Institute and the Ministry. There are many NSS centres in many of such

institutions they can be harnessed for the purpose. The RGNIYD can anchor the academic sector to accelerate these activities.

- (xvi) The availability of staff is also constrained. There is a need to support necessary staff so that administrative support is provided as per requirement. Administrative staff provides the support that the faculty may need to carry out their activities. So, it is equally important that the staff is happy and motivated. The grievances of the staff may be looked into and their capacity building activities may also be carried out.
- (xvii) The Institute should focus on more researches on issues related to youths. The topics may be decided in consultation with the Ministry. While the salary structure of the faculty members is as per UGC guidelines, the faculty members expressed desire for enhanced research opportunities. Funding policy research is a critical area. The Ministry may consider earmarking some money for researches every year in the budget of RGNIYD to initiate a research cycle. The Ministry may identify the topics of such researches based on the requirement of the Ministry and ask the Institute to provide policy inputs.
- (xviii) Placement cell in the campus needs to be activated further as per requirement and potential of the sector. The courses run at institute should present a model to the sector on youth upliftment.
- (xix) The Ministry may ensure that a full time Director is always there, so that the administration of the Institute does not face issues like lapse of positions, recruitment of teachers and staff, etc. A full time Director may also plan for necessary linkages like forging convergences with other important stakeholders like Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Social Justice, private entities working in the sector, etc.
- (xx) Faculty development should be guided by UGC guidelines given focus as upward placement, workload, publication etc. The management appears to be positive on this aspect.

(xxi) In view of vast scope, value for money and need of the hour, the institute should be continued and taken up for expansion plan. It should address the 'youth' in a wider sense of job, income, social cohesion and national integration.