

‘Youngistan’ – Discussion on Models for Working with Youth

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Abstract

Youth is always considered as the dynamic section of society which stands inevitable both as age category and social status. There is a strong tendency among politicians, researchers to see youth bulge as a problem to be solved or as a threat which must be treated. However youth are underestimated as positive agents of change and key actors in development and harmony of the nation. But then more importantly, providing a conducive environment for youth is crucial and remains as the biggest challenge in India as the nation is going to be the youngest nation in the world demographically and will remain the same for next couple of decades. This paper explores the role of youth in development and various models and approaches by which the society and professionals working with youth can address those queries and anxieties associated with the youth bulge. Further the paper explores the scope of youth work in India as the nation is going to be the youngest nation in couple of years. Further research and debates on youth work as a profession in India is an essential element to develop specific guidance to support policy and commissioning processes in understanding how youth work contributes to effective interventions and improves the lives of young people.

Keywords: Youth, Youth bulge, Development, Youth work

INTRODUCTION

India is undergoing a huge demographic transition and this shift has decorated the Indian human resource and anticipated hype in Indian economy, provided if planned accordingly. Every third person in an Indian city today is a youth. In coming few years the median individual in India will be of 29 years, youngest country in the world. Is India fully ready to accommodate the change? The dynamic transformation must be accommodated systematically so as to make sure that the potential youth population must not be misdirected and disoriented. How India is going to address the inequalities among the different sections of same youth population. A Recent study¹ published

by IRIS Knowledge Foundation in collaboration with UN-HABITAT has listed that the greater the political participation, policy level engagement and improving the quality of life can ensure the benefits of this dividend at the fullest.

By 2020, India is set to become the world's youngest country with 64 per cent of its population in the working age group. The population in the age-group of 15-34 increased from 353 million in 2001 to 430 million in 2011. Current predictions suggest a steady increase in the youth population to 464 million by 2021 and finally a decline to 458 million by 2026. As per the International Monetary Fund reports² 2 % of advancement anticipated in the GDP growth rate because of the demographic change. This feature gives a special space for India in the global economic scenario.

The so called youth bulge possess a potential to inoculate new dynamism into its flagging economy. Failure to do so, will upshot a demographic disaster. The key to transforming the demographic dividend into a productive the approach from quantity to quality rather than quantity inclusive of a pattern with greater numbers of better trained, healthier and more productive people. The relationship here is mutually reinforcing; India must harness the advantage of its youth to fulfill its economic potential, and in turn must generate growth in order to continue to support its growing population. As noted by India's former Minister of Human Resource Development, Kapil Sibal, "it will be a dividend if we empower our young. It will be a disaster if we fail to put in place a policy and framework where they can be empowered."

The report by UN habitat further says that, regional disparities in education could affect the overall productivity and thus the benefits will not be evenly spread across the country. The southern and western

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States will be the first to experience a growth dividend as they accounted for 63 per cent of all formally trained people. The largest share of youth with formal skills was found in Kerala, followed by Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat. Among those undergoing training, Maharashtra had the highest share, Bihar the lowest. The unequal access to opportunity and the lack of emphasis on education remains a persistent problem. The report further finds that a person in an urban area has a 93 per cent greater chance of acquiring training than someone in a rural area.

The current paper tries to capture different models to work with the different sections of youth in India. Particularly, models and approaches which has been successfully practiced in India and across globally. The second section of the paper talks about the state youth commission formed and functioning in Kerala. The Kerala youth model is discussed so that other states can also replicate the best practices and intervention pattern followed after understanding the nature of problems.

'YOUNGISTAN'

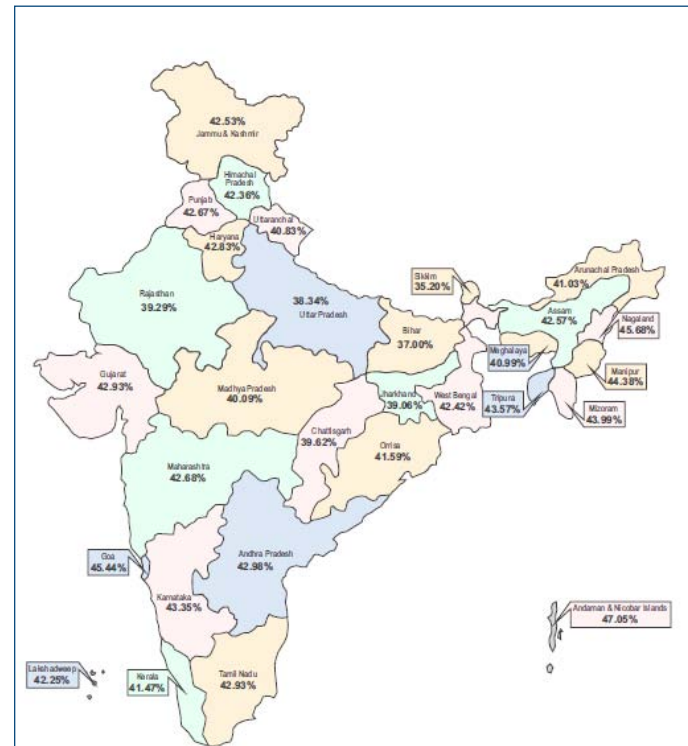
While the youth population is fast shrinking with higher dependency ratios in the developed world, India is blessed with 70% of her population below the age of 35 years. In the next few decades India will probably have the world's largest number of young people. The time has never been better to 'invest' in our young people. Efforts, therefore, need to be made to harness the energy of the youth towards nation-building through their active and responsive participation. India has crossed one billion marks in its population. More than 50% of its population is below the age of 25 and more than 65% below the age of 35. It is anticipated that, in 2020, the middling age of an Indian will be 29 years, where china is with 37 and japan with 48. India's dependency ratio should be just over 0.4 by 2030. The Government of India officially defines youth as persons between the ages of 13 and 35 years and it also varies depending on the programme. Whereas the National Youth Policy 2012 aims to cover the age-bracket of 16-30 years¹. Meanwhile there is an increasing binder and investment to backing the provision of youth work services.

'Youngistan' is a term coined by a branded non-alcoholic beverage to explicit and communicates the idea of India

¹ Retrived from Wikipedia : http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_India on 9th Feb 2015

being the youngest nation demographically. The term is conceptualized as an amalgamation of two words that 'Young' and 'istan', where 'istan' means 'land'. And the term apparently means Young people's land –*Youngistan*. **India – youngistan !!!!**

Glimpse of Indian Youth



India has the largest population of Youth in the world currently and among them people aged below 20 is about 55 percentage of the total population.

Data and Image extracted from the study conducted by Un Habitat (State of Urban Youth India -2012,- Edited and Published by Padma Prakash

YOUTH WORK

The Government of India officially defines youth as persons between the ages of 13 and 35 years and it also varies depending on the programme. Whereas the National Youth Policy 2012 (Draft) aims to cover the age-bracket of 16-30 years³ increasing binder and investment to backing the provision of youth work services and there is an on-going debate on professionalization of youth work internationally. Youth work is relatively new profession where it helps young people learn about themselves,

others and society, through informal educational activities which combine enjoyment, challenge and learning.

As an evolving field of practice, there is currently no agreement nationally on the definition of youth work and about its professionalization in India. However Commonwealth has started diploma courses in youth work during 1994². It has tried to establish youth work as a discipline in academics in collaboration with 3 Indian universities. The lack of consent on the definition and nature of 'youth work' in Indian perspectives and the fact that involvement in the lives of young people is certainly the principal area too many disciplines may complicate the research in this field. Emerging indication does suggest that youth work as part of the wider youth development sector has the potential to impact on the lives of young people (Young, 2005; Merton, et al., 2004⁴) and that operative youth work has the potential to increase benefits in the life of the young person and empower them and youth workers, work typically with young people. Their work seeks to promote young people's personal and social development and enable them to have a power of speech, inspire and space in their communities and society as a whole. There are lot of reasons, which hinders the growth of Youth work as a profession some among those are:

- Although social service professionals are providers of youth development services they seldom prioritize young people as their primary target group
- There is a delay in finalizing the professionalization process despite international evidence showing that this field is worthy to be designated as a profession (Hahn & Raley; 1998:393; Maunders, 2006:24). This indicates the importance of research on the dynamics of youth and other related issues
- As part of service provision for young people, the views of social service professionals on the emergence of Youth Work are not known
- Less research and qualitative understanding of problems and concerns of different sub sections of youth in India

Youth work is underpinned by a clear set of values. These include (NYA guide³)

- young people choosing to take part
- utilizing young people's view of the world
- treating young people with respect
- seeking to develop young people's skills and attitudes rather than remedy 'problem behaviours'
- helping young people develop stronger relationships and collective identities
- respecting and valuing differences
- promoting the voice of young people

Different Models under for Youth Development

- The Treatment model defines young people as deviant, mad or deficient. They present a social threat to the community. Young people must be treated or made to conform to societal 'norms' to become productive members of society and if this is unsuccessful, action should be taken to protect society
- The Reform Model defines young people as being socially disadvantaged by their environment and upbringing. This in turn may make them social outcasts and cause them to inflict violent behaviour on themselves or others
- The Advocacy Model defines young people as being marginalized by current society through inadequate basic rights or social protection. Young people are ill informed as to their rights and how to access them. Society is viewed under this model as fundamentally unjust in its laws and bureaucracy
- The empowerment model holds that young people don't have enough control or power over their lives. Impacting on this is society's view that young people need to be protected from themselves and others. The core values framing the model are that young people need to be given more control over their lives and that they are capable of making independent decisions, providing adults allow them. It also states that empowerment can be achieved if the young person is assisted to become more powerful within whatever framework of values they individually choose.

² Retrieved details from http://www.thecommonwealth.org/Internal/152834/152877/152838/cyp_diploma/

³ NYA Guide to Youth Work and Youth Services retrieved from <http://www.nya.org.uk/resource/nya-guide-youth-work-youth-services/>

OTHER MODELS AND PRACTICES

An Irish model

Models of Youth Work – a sociological framework is a model composed by Hurley and Treacy in the year 1993. The stated purpose of their model was to provide a theoretical framework to guide youth work practice. As an organizing principle for their model, Hurley and Treacy used a sociological framework originally developed by Burrell and Morgan (1979). In Ireland, youth work is structurally allied to education, and discussion within this model begins with a sociological exploration of the role and practice of education from each sociological perspective that informs their model. Their main argument is that very different forms of youth work developed from differing modes of social analysis by practitioners, and that these forms still co-exist. In their full explanation of their model, Hurley and Treacy elucidate the ideological dimensions of each approach, how each approach analyses young people's needs, and implications of each approach for programmes in areas of life skills education, recreation, political education, vocational training, and arts and creativity. They also draw out the practical implications of each approach for the youth work role and processes, for relationship with young people, for how participation should be structured, and for intended outcomes for young people and society. The model is well-known in Ireland, but not widely known elsewhere.

An Australian Model

In 1994, Youth Studies Australia published an article on Models of Youth Work Intervention by Cooper and White (1994). The very purpose of the model was to 'clarify the different orientations and practices associated with different kinds of youth work activity'. Six different models (or approaches) were presented and brought together through the organizing principle of political ideology. The nomenclature used to describe each approach relates to the nature of the intervention. The main argument, implicit within this overall model, is that different political ideologies, worldviews and values spawn very different forms of youth work, and that these different forms continue to develop and co-exist. Structurally, this argument parallels the argument proposed by Hurley and Treacy about social analysis, and

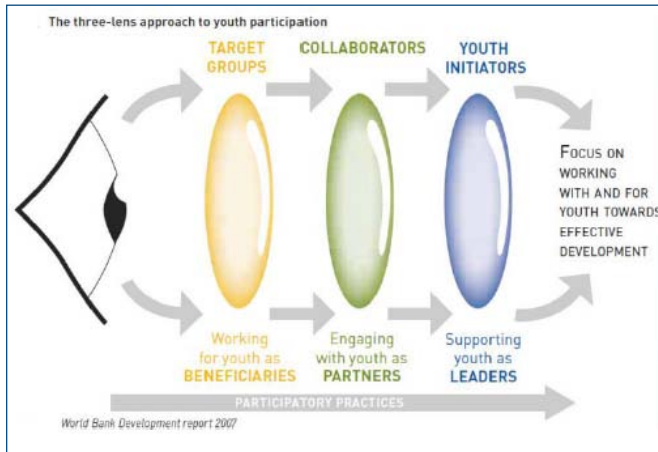
is consistent with Smith's analysis. The six approaches discussed are Treatment, Reform, Non-radical Advocacy, Radical Advocacy, Non-radical Empowerment, and Radical Empowerment. Each approach is discussed in terms of its political ideological foundations, how it constructs young people's problems, its perspective on society, assumptions about human nature, core values of the approach, motivation for intervention, types of intervention, skills required of workers, and disciplines that inform practice. The model explicitly refers to the language used to describe young people and relates this to political ideological perspectives and assumptions about human nature. The focus on language highlights two aspects, not discussed in other models. Firstly, similar language is used to describe some quite different forms of intervention, see for example Radical Empowerment vs. Non-radical Empowerment, and Radical Advocacy vs. Non-radical Advocacy. Secondly, the focus on language provides a useful quick method to identify underlying values within new policy initiatives.

Boy with a Ball is an international positive youth development organization which believes that young people function and develop in a continuously ongoing, reciprocal process of interaction with their environment or ecosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1979a, 1979b, 1989, 1993⁵). Much work has been done to understand exactly what resources are necessary for a young person to develop optimally the origination has listed 40 Developmental Assets which are grouped into eight categories: Four categories of external assets (support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations and constructive use of time) and four categories of internal assets (commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies and positive identity.)

Boy with a Ball Global has worked together with the local organizations within its network to develop a model that has proven highly successful as an intervention capable of developing young people, their families and the high-poverty neighborhoods, or slums, in which they live. The model is a result of intensive ethnography, program design, evaluation, research and adjustment performed by dozens of highly dedicated and skilled staff members alongside hundreds of volunteers. This program was implemented in San Jose, Costa Rica⁴ initially where it helped 40% of slum settlements, raised the average level

4 San Jose is the capital of Costa Rica, head of the province of San José, and the nation's largest city. Located in the Central Valley

of education from 3rd to 6th grade and eliminated the presence of gangs in the community over a three year period. This strategy was expanded into a second slum settlement and was codified into a replicable model. They have termed it as T.O.M.S.E. it is an acronym for:



*Teams * Outreach * Mentoring * Small groups and * Education/Equipping

An approach coined by the World Bank⁶ seems to be a systematic description of young people’s journey from being beneficiaries to the leaders of the community. This approach engages young people in consultation, planning and implementation of community programmes and developmental initiatives. This approach seems to be dynamic which can be integrated by NGOs and other institutions those who are working along with young people.

Kerala State Youth Commission

This section of paper describes about the organizational structure and functioning of Kerala State Youth Commission. It is model approach in working with youth through the system which can be replicated in all the states.

Kerala State Youth Commission (KSYC) is formed for the purpose of evolving and implementing programs for educating and empowering the youth and to function as a protector of their rights. The youth of the country has immense potential and if channelized properly, this will bring excellent result in achieving the goal set for the welfare of the country. It is needless to point that the youth of the state is facing immense problems which also require immediate attention. It is needed to create increasing opportunities to the youth to develop their

personality, their functional capacity and also to preserve their legitimate rights, avoiding any possible exploitation. The Kerala State Youth Commission is a quasi-judicial institution started functioning through ordinance promulgated by government in the year 2013 and passed by the enactment of legislature in the year 2014.

Commission consists of a Chairperson; and not more than thirteen members of whom one shall be a qualified, least three shall be women and one among the women shall belong to the Scheduled Tribe. Chairperson and the members are appointed the Government. Also the Government shall appoint a person who is or has held a post not below the rank of an Additional Secretary to Government as the Secretary. Headquarters of the Commission is at Thiruvananthapuram, in VikasBhavan. The Chairperson is a full-time officer having the Rank of Secretary to Government. The Government provides the Commission with such officers and other employees as may be required for the proper functioning of the Commission.

Powers of the Commission

The Commission may for the purpose of carrying out its functions, utilize the services of any officer of the Government with the permission of the Government; or any officer of the state-owned Corporations and Local Authorities with the consent of such Corporations or Local Authorities and with the concurrence of the Government.

The Commission while performing its functions under section 9, have all the powers of a Civil Court trying a suit under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 (Central Act 5 of 1908) in respect of the following matters, namely: - summoning and enforcing the attendance of any person and examining him on oath; requiring the discovery and production of any document, receiving evidence on affidavits, requisitioning any public record or copy thereof from any court or office, issuing commissions for the examination of witnesses or documents, any other matter, which may be prescribed.

The Commission while conducting the enquiry under section 9, shall afford opportunity to all parties to present their views by themselves or by their authorized representatives. The finding of the commission on any enquiry conducted under this Ordinance shall be communicated to the Government with its recommendation

for appropriate action or relief to the parties to the dispute.

Functions of the Commission

- To function as a protector of youth affairs in the State.
- To inculcate and educate among the youth the dignity of labour
- To co-ordinate the Government departments for securing better education and employment opportunities to youth.
- To develop and harness the potential of the youth in order to attain total empowerment and excellence.
- To undertake promotional and educational research so as to suggest the Government better ways of ensuring employment opportunities to the youth.
- To advise the Government in the planning process for the socio-economic development of the youth, especially those who belong to the weaker section and tribal section.
- To explore the scope and potential of the youth in all levels of activities so as to make them attain high degree of accomplishment by developing their creativity and skills.
- To monitor occupational hazards faced by the youth in the unorganized sector.
- To inquire into any complaints with respect to deprivation of rights of youth and to recommend to the Government the action to be taken in that matter.
- To advise the Government in any other matter as may be referred to it, from time to time.

The statement or deposition given by a person relating to himself before the Commission as part of taking evidence shall not be used in a proceedings before any civil court or criminal court, except in prosecution proceedings for giving false evidence by way of such statement or deposition.

Major Interventions by Kerala State Youth Commission

Kerala State Youth Commission within its short period of intervention in the State has done enormously for the youth in protecting their rights and ensuring their welfare. Commission is keen in the areas of the deprivation of

the rights of youth. KSYC is organizing awareness programme for against Alcohol, Drugs, Cyber-crimes and Ragging etc. through Colleges and SC/ ST Colonies. The commission has organized a National Youth Meet for national integration which included an academic session (symposium), youth icon award and cultural extravaganza. Youth Defense Force is another mechanism launched by the commission which will be focusing college campus and colonies to strive against alcoholism and drugs and to promote awareness on cybercrime, road safety etc. Youth Defense Force volunteers are identified across the state under the Commission. Presence of State Women's Commission for the protection of the rights of girls and women is another major step by the Government considering the importance and crucial role of youth in the society. Apart from all these, KSYC intrudes into issues faced by youth and suggests intervention which ultimately provides justice and equality. The major interventions of KSYC are:

- provision to sit (relax) in the commercial establishments especially in textile shops and big malls where inhuman rules and regulations were practiced
- addressed the issues of employment exploitation and use of alcoholism and drugs among the aborigine youth of Attapady area
- addressed Issues related to Sree-Chitra Poor home and shifting its inhabitants to MahilaMandiram, Poojapura and building a commercial establishment in the place
- Issues of the youth in Agastyavanam Colony
- Proposal to Govt. to make changes in the liquor policy of the state

Suggestions

Besides the activities mentioned here the Commission can take up the following activities as its program among youth.

1. The issues and problems faced by in-migrant labour youth in Kerala to be addressed. Organise their local festivals and convene meetings with them.
2. Accreditation of NGOs/Youth Clubs working among youth.
3. 24 hours counselling service for youth in need.
4. A toll free number for filing complaints and providing counselling.

5. Universalisation of pre-marital training for youth of all communities.
6. Constitution of Youth Research Centre under KSYC.
7. Collaboration with RGNIYD (national Institute for youth development) for training and research.
8. Appointing 2 youth volunteers each in every PRIs (Panchayat Raj Institutes) across the state.
9. Collaboration with national, bilateral, and unilateral international organisations and agencies for research, consultancy and training.
10. National Youth Meet- Ensure the participation of atleast two youth representatives from each state across India. Categorise delegates' as IT Professionals, Social Workers, Politicians, College Students, Research Scholars, Nurses, Youth representing SC/ST community and Dalitsetc and ensure the proportionate representation of each category or group.
11. International Youth Meet- It will help in cultural integration and organising exchange programs. We can mobilize international delegates from our universities also.
12. Youth Mission- An entrepreneurship Program and Job fair for youth.
13. Youth Voice- Publish a bi-annual magazine comprising of articles related to youth. Get it as an approved journal of Universities.
14. Youth Blood Forum for voluntary blood donation in every district.

Religious – Political movements for youth in Kerala

Sensing the huge potential of youth in the society, various religious and political bodies have come up with movements which attracts youth and binds them with the ideologies and thus be a part of such institutions. They have been working on the aspects such as,

- Life skill training and career counselling
- Pre and post marital education
- Sensitization of youth problems and concerns
- Providing platform for discussions
- Organizing social movements to ensure active and

vigilant citizenship

There is a huge pool of such institutions which can be effectively used and revamped in a way that these institutions may have integration and regular dialogues with each other's so as to ensure multi – Institutional collaboration and involvement in Youth development.

What research speaks about young people??

A survey of young people who had applied for the UNHABITAT's youth-led fund discovered how youth perceive about various approaches:

Much of the research on youth-in both 'developed' and 'developing' countries focuses on the developmental needs of young people (that is, the process of supporting young people in developing into capable, contributing adults), rather than on focusing on the resources and assets that youth bring into a community development context.

It is very crucial that how does a community define young people. The productivity of young people are much linked with the notion and identified roles associated with them in the society.

In a research paper by PravinVisaria⁵ points out that the high rates of youth unemployment need serious attention by the policy makers not only to mitigate the frustrations faced by the new entrants into the workforce but also to minimize the likely alienation. Sometimes the deviant behaviour spotted among the young people is linked with the economic role associated with them and it is problematic when the concerns of young people are unmet for long duration.

Interestingly Gale and Fahey (2005)⁶ records that the, most research on youth are been conducted by older academicians or the older school of thoughts. The tendency isfor it to be "impressionistic, confined to disciplinary boundaries and lacking insight into the issues that confront youth". While conducting research the researchers must remain conscious about incorporating/

5 Visaria, Pravin (1998). Unemployment among Youth in India: Level, Nature and Policy Implications, Employment and Training Papers, 36, International Labour Office, Geneva.

6 Gale, Fay and Fahey, Stephanie (2005). 'Introduction', The Challenges ofGenerational Change in Asia, the Association of Asian SocialScience Councils in association with the Association of SocialSciences, Australia.

capturing the views of young people and qualitative aspects concerned with young people. Sometimes real life testimonials of young people contributes alot. As the group is so dynamic and because of this dynamics we can find a considerable number of subsections with in the category of ‘ Young people’.

Skelton and Gough (2013; 458)⁷ analyzing contributions to Urban Studies from 1990 to 2013 found out of 2992 papers only 1 per cent focused on young people. There is a clear case for encouraging and training young people to undertake research on youth and their world with a view to understanding what they may bring to the development agenda.

Beyond the Present Scenario

Perhaps the most crucial task India faces is equipping its growing youth population with education and skills training. According to India’s 2011 Census, India’s literacy rate sits around 74%, with significant variation according to state and gender. The quality of education must be set in a way that it should address the issue of employability of candidates than just graduating them and come up with some good statistics in terms of literacy.

“The world is ageing, but India has youth by her side.” Or should we believe that India is resting on a ticking time bomb. It is a growing mass of largely undernourished, undereducated, unemployable young people who aspire for a healthier life but don’t have the means to get there. So it is essential to build a group of competent professionals focusing particularly on Youth in India. The youth work models practiced across globe must be analyzed well through research and qualitative understanding of different sections of youth is inevitable for India as the nation envisions growth and development in coming decades. As discussed earlier there is an alarming need of research in youth studies as India is going to be the youngest country by 2020. It is essential to conduct research in different aspects where youth are stakeholders in order to deliver better services and opportunities to them. Youth work is a crucial area which can address most of the questions raised in the arena of youth Development/ empowerment, so there is a need

to have intense and quality researches in this field. The models discussed can be customized after understanding the dynamics of the youth group and can be replicated by closely working with youth. The effort behind this research article is to elucidate various healthy practices across globe and a special case study on the intervention carried out by the Kerala State Youth Commission so as to provide a minimal understanding about the scope of research associated with young people in the nation.

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⁷ Skelton, Tracey and Katherine Gough (2013). Introduction: Young People’s Im/Mobile Urban Geographies, *Urban Studies*, 50(3), 455-466.