

# Youth in India: Prospects and Challenges

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# Outline

- Institutional structure for young people in India
- Participation of youth, specifically in the political process
- Understanding employment-unemployment and youth aspirations
- Youth resistance and mobilisation

# Demographic Dividend

## Numbers

- Estimated working age population, 2020(NYP 2014).
  - India - 592 million,
  - China - 776 million
- Median age
  - India - 29 years,
  - China - 42 years,
  - Russia - 38 years and
  - South Africa is 27.
  - But in absolute numbers, India has the youngest people

## Institutions and Policy

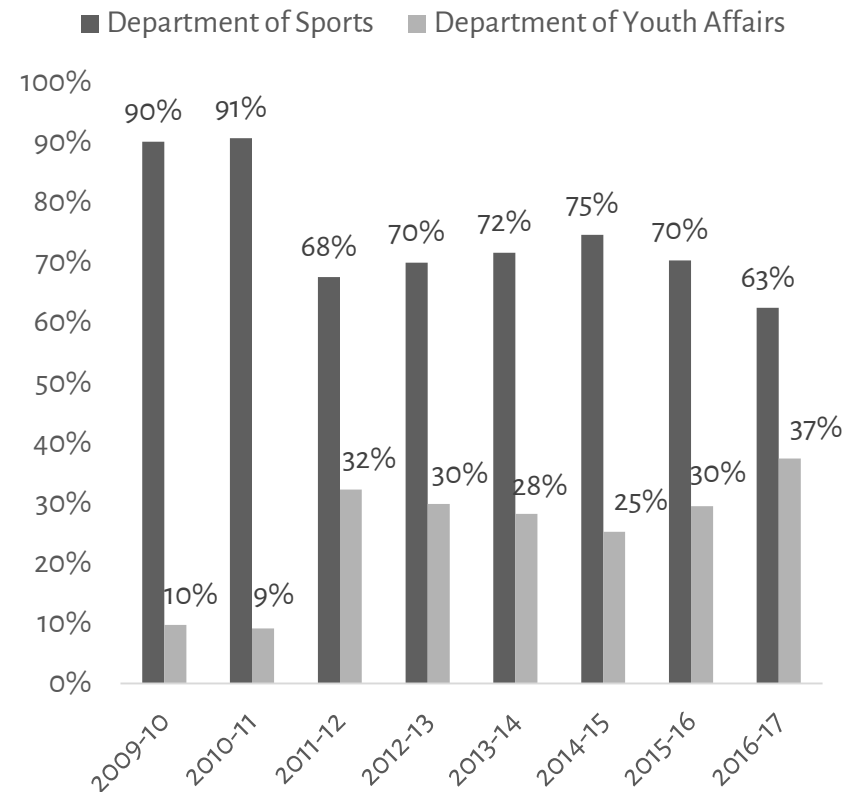
- 330 million(Census of India 2011), close to 27.5 % of the population
- Youth Policy in India
  - Ministry – Youth Affairs and Sports (YAS)
  - Policy – National Youth Policy, 2014
  - Age - 15-29 years

# Conflating Sports & Youth Affairs

National Youth Policy	
Objectives	Priority Areas
1. Create a productive workforce that can make a sustainable contribution to India's economic development	1. Education
	2. Employment and skill development
	3. Entrepreneurship
2. Develop a strong and healthy generation equipped to take on future challenges	4. Health and healthy lifestyle
	5. Sports
3. Instill social values and promote community service to build national ownership	6. Promotion of social values
	7. Community engagement
4. Facilitate participation and civic engagement at all levels of governance	8. Participation in politics and governance
	9. Youth engagement
5. Support youth at risk and create equitable opportunity for all dis-advantaged and marginalised youth	10. Inclusion
	11. Social justice

Source: Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, 2014

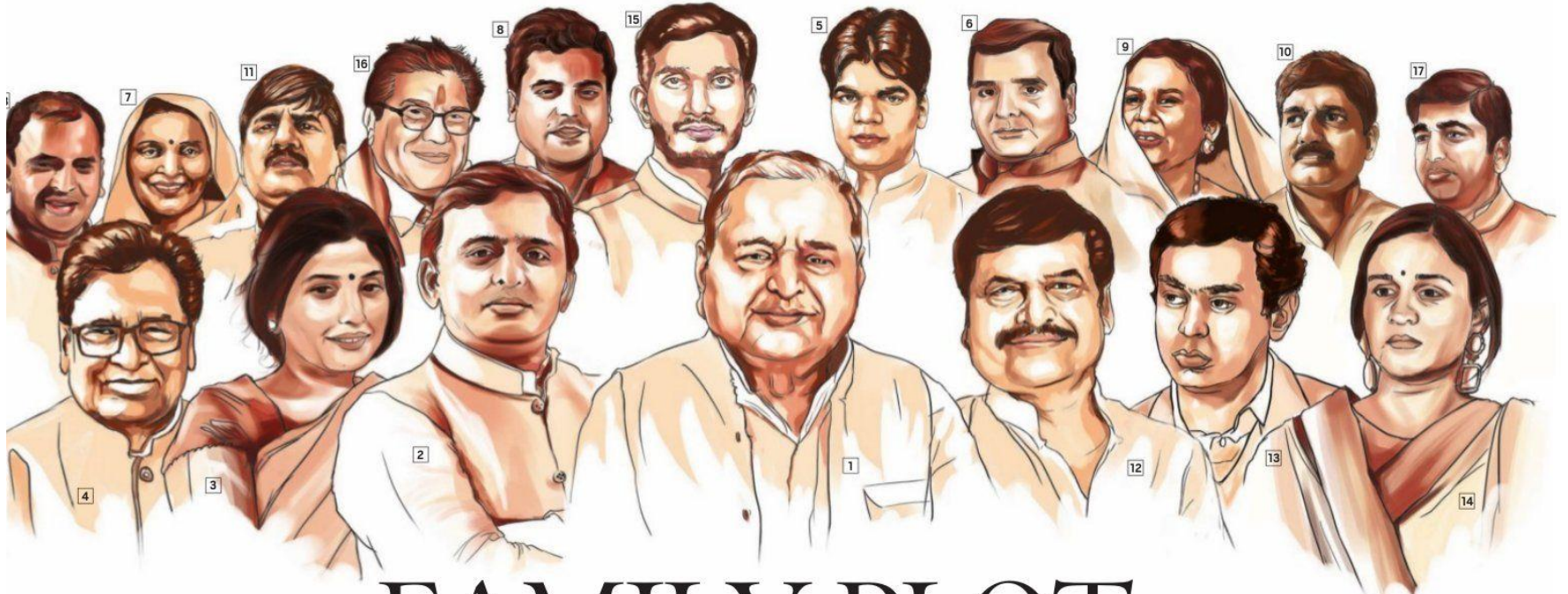
Allocation of budget to Department of Sports & Youth Affairs



Source: Ministry of Finance, various budget documents

# Yadav clan - “India’s largest, divided, political family”

(Indian Express, September 25)



Illustrations: Manali Ghosh

## FAMILY PLOT

IT WAS nearly 50 years ago that Mulayam Singh Yadav was first elected as an MLA. Seventeen other family members have followed him into public life since. Even by the standards of Indian political dynasties, the great Samajwadi parivar has few parallels. So far, Mulayam has juggled the sons, daughters-in-law, brothers, cousins, nephews, nieces, grandnephews reasonably well, adjusting, re-adjusting, finding a position for each. However, as the party heads into a difficult electoral battle, it is showing the first signs of a serious and public rift.

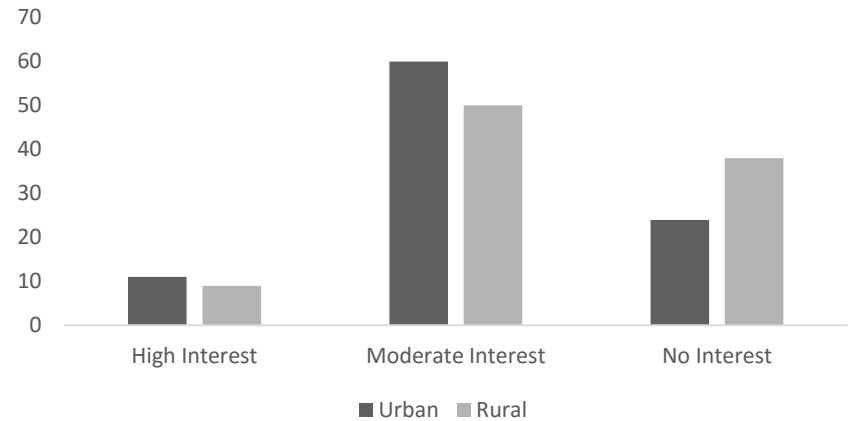
# Political Participation – Dynasts and Non Dynasts

- “Thanks to the family I belong to, I knew that at least my entry would be at a level suitable enough for me to make a contribution” (*Omar Abdullah, third generation dynast from Kashmir*)
- “There are only four ways of entering politics, you have money, you are from a political family like I am, you work hard or you start student politics” (*Rahul Gandhi, Nehru- Gandhi scion*)
- “I am not shying away from marketing my family. My father has done a lot for this region and it is my turn now” (*Jayant Sinha, son of former Finance Minister*)
- “The family system runs because of credibility, Why do people want to buy a Mercedes or BMW car? Because it is producing good cars since decades. You come out with a new car and nobody will buy.” (*Sukhbir Badal, Deputy CM and second generation dynast*)
- Dynasts in Lok Sabha (Parliament) election (Chandra et. al.)
  - 2004 – 20%,
  - 2009 – 30%
  - 2014 – 22%
- Dynasts are younger
  - Average dynastic MPs is around 9 years younger than non-dynastic MPs (2004, 2009)
  - But parliament is oldest
- Dynasts don’t have experience:
  - 5% of dynasts in 15<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha and 9% dynasts in 16<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha have served local governments.

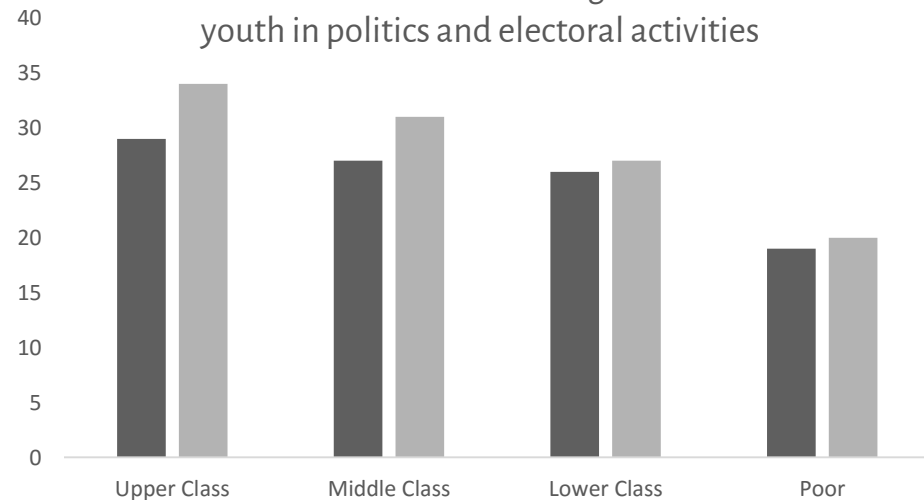
# However, interests in politics remain high...

- Anecdotal and survey evidence shows that youth interest in politics is on the rise.
- The interest in politics is confined to young urban men.
- Those who admit to significant exposure to the media show greater interest in politics
- Education is a factor in young people's rising interest in politics.
- Greater participation in election related activities does not translate into larger voter turnout.
- The urban youth is politically oriented, but still not politically very active, and a few steps away from becoming an active political community.

Interest in politics among urban and rural youth

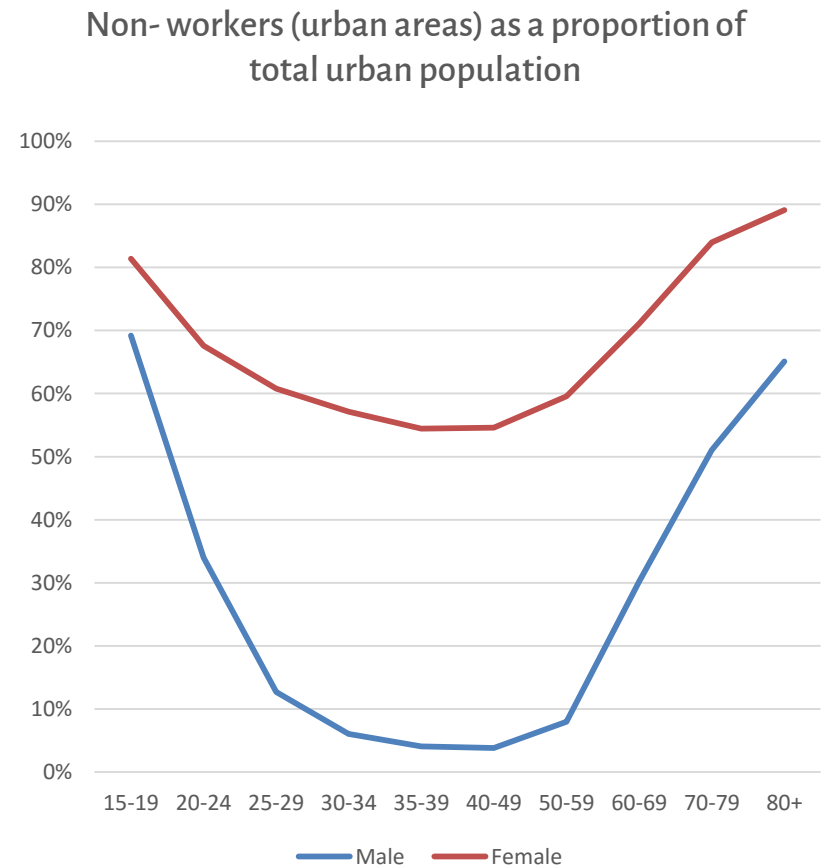


Class wise level of interest among rural and urban youth in politics and electoral activities



# Youth employment and unemployment

- Youth (15-29) in urban India start working late
- More than half the young women do not work
- Among urban non-workers, 21% of the youth are reported to be 'seeking work'
- Almost half (47%) of male out-migrants in India from rural and urban areas (most seeking employment) are young



Source: Census 2011



# “What am I educated for if I had to plough the fields only”: Understanding youth expectations

- Working in agriculture perceived as inferior and sub-standard (Kunduri forthcoming), and looked down as a second best option (Carswell and De Neve 2014)
- Tropes of modernity deployed are interpreted as negotiation with informality and precarity (Kunduri forthcoming)
- 10.5 million manufacturing jobs were created between 1989 and 2010, of which only about 35% (3.7 million) were in the formal sector (Economic Survey of India 2015-16)

# Youth mobilisation and resistance

- What implications, then does the lack of stable, secure employment have for youth politics, mobilisation? What are the negotiations at play?
- Young, unemployed youth are in a state of 'waiting' and/or limbo in search for stable employment (Jeffrey 2010)
- Limbo provides a context for cross-class action and solidarity (ibid.)
- The university as the site of resistance continues to raise critical questions about citizenship, democratic ideals, and public institutions
  - Protests over scholarships in India
  - Fees must fall in South Africa
- Need to critically interrogate these resistances to account for a nuanced understand of youth and governance

# THANK YOU

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