

YOUTH MANIFESTO

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Background

- General Elections—15th Lok Sabha
 - Prime Ministerial Candidates:
 - Senior, Experienced, Above 75 years
 - While India is a Young Nation
 - 700 million people below 35
 - Is There a Disconnect?
 - Can We Help Remedy That?
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Does It Matter? Are Youth Special?

- Yes!
 - India's youth today represent a new set of aspirations
 - There's a spirit that we can be the best in the world in every way
 - There's also concern that there are too few opportunities
 - And too many divides
 - We must fix that to cash in on ...
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The Demographic Dividend

- ❑ While Europe & Japan are ageing, India is young
 - ❑ India has a huge proportion of population between 15 and 65—working age—and a low dependency ratio
 - ❑ This means we can be extraordinarily productive going forward
 - ❑ And maintain growth rates of 8% plus
 - ❑ And be the workforce of the world
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But ...

- "Without proper education, the demographic dividend could turn into a demographic disaster" Nandan Nilekani
 - Nilekani, in *Imagining India*, states that India's demographic dividend could be reaped through investment in human resources, infrastructure, creative innovation and enterprise.
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So Have Our Parties Got It?

- ❑ Do they understand that India's at a crucial stage in her history
 - ❑ That we are at a cusp
 - ❑ If we seize the moment, if we figure out how to unleash the potential of our youth
 - ❑ We can make India the world leader in the 21st century
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Let's Check the Manifestos

- ❑ Parties chart out their intended course of action in their manifestos
 - ❑ Often manifestos are vague or do not get fully implemented
 - ❑ But nowadays, parties are getting more detailed in manifestos
 - ❑ And the press and civil society want to hold parties accountable for poll promises
 - ❑ So let's see what parties plan for youth
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The Incumbent—Congress

- ❑ Will put in a skill development program to enhance employability of youth
 - ❑ UPA government has set up National Skills Development Mission. Rs 30,000 crores
 - ❑ First-generation entrepreneurs -- greater access to collateral-free credit
 - ❑ “Peace Corps” equivalent for India
 - ❑ Youth Reservations in panchayati elections
 - ❑ (And, of course, it will give us Rahul Gandhi)
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The Challenger—The BJP

- ❑ Skill Development with emphasis on SC/ST, OBC youth, web-based training, value-added rural jobs
 - ❑ Revive and re-launch NSS and NCC
 - ❑ National Sports Talent Search
 - ❑ Sports Infrastructure Investments
 - ❑ Emphasis on empowerment by providing quality education
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The Eternal Rebel—The CPM

- ❑ National youth policy to be adopted
 - ❑ Providing a network of sports and cultural facilities for youth
 - ❑ Restructuring Nehru Yuva Kendra to promote India's cultural diversity and national unity
 - ❑ Earmarking 15% of priority sector lending by banks for the Muslims; subsidised credit to be ensured for the self-employed Muslim youth
 - ❑ The North East to be declared a priority region for development; Developing physical infrastructure and special employment schemes for the youth
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The Local Flavour—JD(S)

- ❑ Banks to lend loans to unemployed educated youths to start their own self-employment activities The government will stand guarantee for loans up to Rs. 5 lakh
 - ❑ Government owned Venture Capital Fund
 - ❑ Expansion/improvement of higher education
 - ❑ Rural Origin Reservations
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Satisfied?

- Are these promises enough to help India encash the demographic dividend?
 - Do we get the sense that the parties are missing out on India's historic chance?
 - Can we suggest better options to them?
 - Is there a youth approach to policies?
 - As India's youth, what are our priorities?
 - How do we achieve our goals?
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Youth is More than Just Age

- ❑ Youth means freshness and idealism
 - ❑ Youth means looking at problems without being burdened by legacy
 - ❑ Youth means readiness to experiment
 - ❑ Youth is about different content
 - ❑ Youth is about different attitude
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Example: Mobile as Youth Agenda

- ❑ When we were burdened by the challenge of wiring the nation to provide telecom connectivity
 - ❑ Along came mobile telephony
 - ❑ Leapfrogged over old land lines
 - ❑ Introduced private sector competition
 - ❑ Now teledensity has grown
 - ❑ And even the poor have access
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So Apply Your Minds ... and Hearts

- Think of your priorities
 - Think of what problems you face
 - Think of what comes in your way as you try to achieve your potential
 - Then think of ways you can overcome
 - In fresh, creative, revolutionary ways
 - It doesn't matter if you don't agree
 - Brainstorm, discuss, engage constructively
 - We'll encash that demographic dividend yet!
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