

Youths in the New Constitution



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Background

The present world, besides making exponential leaps in the field of science and technology (ST), is beset with several challenges like poverty. While all minds are turned towards minimizing the global problems, a major stakeholder that occupies the world population—youths—is being ignored. There is no unequivocal and universally received definition of the youths that constitute about 18 per cent of the total population of the world. Yet the term “youths” denotes such populace that has crossed beyond the childhood and adolescence and has not yet attained adulthood. If we see the world history, youths are found to have made prime contribution in the political, social, and economic transformation of every country. The youth generation (generationnext) is always regarded as the pillars (torchbearers) of the future but the fact that they are not only future holders, rather they are the partners of the present should be borne in mind, too. At present, all the conflicts occurring all over the world have mostly involved the youths. In this age of globalization, if the youth population totaling 1.6 billion is distanced completely away from the development, political, and economic activities and if it is deprived of basic services and facilities, then the world will incur a heavy loss in future. Therefore, the organizations like the United Nations Organization (UNO) has been highly prioritizing the young people. This has recently infected Nepal as well, but that alone is not sufficient. Therefore, while talking in the context of Nepal, it is imperative that the new constitution now being drafted alone constitutionally addresses the rights and duties of the youths.

Youths in Nepal

There does exist the national youth policy but it has not yet been enforced. It has, consequently, led to a dilemma regarding who the youths are and whom to call as youths. In a country like ours that experiences racial, religious, and regional diversities, all the youths do not share the common problems. Therefore, it is difficult to see the youths from one single perspective on the one hand, and on the other it is not so easy to understand the concept of the youths and define them in our context. However, irrespective of their region and sector, the Nepalese youths have three major problems on the whole: identity, representation, and access. To date there has been no clear-cut definition about who the youths are. Moreover, the youths have been given no representation in development work as well as different agencies of the state on the basis of their ability and capability. There is greater tendency to mobilize the youths than to

involve them in nation building. As a result, the youths feel less motivated to take part in such activity. Regarding their access, most of the youths have not received the least facilities like food, cloth, accommodation, education, health, employment, information technology, and so on. This has forced many youths to take to revolution even today in the name of class, caste, creed, and regionalism.

Till now the Nepalese youths have not been given proper place by the state and political parties. Nevertheless, no one can forget their leading role in the political movements (uprisings) so far. Nepalese youths have played a pivotal role in their revolt against the family oligarchy of the Ranas in 2007 to the decade-long armed revolution to the movement of 2062-63.

There is a heaven and hell (vast) difference between the services and amenities received by the urban and rural youths. In the countryside, youths are forced into early marriage and eking out livelihood for themselves and their family and thus attain adulthood at an early age. In the case of Karnali region, people get prematurely married at the age of 12-13 and become parents at the age of 15-16. According to data made public in Mugu district by the District Health Office, 60 per cent of the males using permanent measures of family planning comprised youths of the age groups 18-29. Seen cursorily, the youths of that district range from 13 to 25 years of age. It may be a little different in the hills as well as cities. In this way, the youths can be categorized in different ways. For example,

1. Family condition (the condition of not being mature parents/guardians on the basis of reproductive health);
2. On the basis of average lifespan (maximum 28 percent of total age);
3. On the basis of the age group that the state should make investments for building bona fide citizens (in accordance with Human Development Index—HDI, and census);
4. On the basis of the age group that is selfless, creative, and enthusiastic (in the basis of emotions);
5. On the basis of the age group that is, at present, being socially mobilized but should now onwards be made a participant and partner (on the basis of the conditions of the developing nations).

Keeping these things in mind, in the average Nepalese condition, the age group ranging from 15-16 to 30-35 can be considered as the youths. As their growth and age differ, exceptionally even the people of 12 years age can be seen as youths and so can be those of 37-38 years age. However, keeping such groups apart, a person in Nepalese context can remain youth for a maximum of 18 years only. As for example, the government enrolls youths as civil servants and their age bar is 18 to 35 years. This makes 17 years of age difference. The less the age difference, the more the investment and more effective the common programs.

Definition of Youths

Different opinions are found regarding the definition of the youths. Some define the youths on the basis of their age group; others on the basis of their thoughts and attitudes (concepts); yet others in accordance with their creativity. The United Nations Organization has defined people of 15 to 24 years age groups as youths while determining the issues of their priority as well. Seen from the perspective of age group, different nations have defined youths of different age groups. The draft of national youth policy, 2059 prepared by the erstwhile His Majesty's Government (HMG) has mentioned the youths as belonging to the age groups of 15 to 29. However, the draft of national youth policy, 2065 prepared by the Ministry of Youth and Sports, Government of Nepal has mentioned the youths as belonging to the age groups of 16 to 35. Similarly, the Interim Plan of Nepal, 2063 has mentioned the youths as belonging to the age groups of 15 to 29. The Association of Youth Organizations Nepal (AYON) that has a networking with different organizations in Nepal related with youths has mentioned the youths as belonging to the age groups of 16 to 35. However, political parties and their sister organizations consider members of even beyond 45 years of age as youth leaders. Thus the youths are defined differently as per place, context, and condition. Nonetheless, intensive discussions and debates have not yet been held regarding the proper age group of youths that could help in their overall development.

Following are the age groups of youths regarded by different organizations and nations:

Organizations / Nations	Age Groups
United Nations Organization, World Bank	15-24
The Philippines, Bangladesh	15-30
Japan	0-24
Germany	14-26
India	5-35
China	14-28
Malaysia	15-40
Nepal (Interim Plan)	15-29
Association of Youth Organizations Nepal (AYON)	16-35
South Africa	15-29

1. Youth Population

The total population of the youths of 15 to 29 age groups, basing on the draft of national youth policy, 2059

The total population of the youths of Nepal comprising 15 to 29 age groups has been 6,131,248; it makes 26.5 percent of the total population (*National Planning Commission, Interim Plan, 2063*). Of them, the males constitute 48.2 percent while the females form 51.8 percent. Of the total youth population, 0.4 percent are physically and mentally challenged. Of the total population, 83 percent youths reside in rural areas

whereas 17 percent inhabit cities. 40 percent of the total urban population is youths. The youths' trend of migrating to the cities is rising. According to the Census, 2001, the youth literacy is 70.1 percent whereas the unemployment percentage of youths ranging from 15 to 29 age group is 11.4. It is estimated that the total population of the youths will increase over about 29 percent by the year 2009.

2. Present Condition of Youths

The youths have been active in every sphere. In addition, they are a group ever ready for economic, social, political, and cultural development. The population of Nepalese youths is about 33% of the total population. They have consistently been striving towards building prerequisites for an excellent livelihood. They are also prepared to migrate for their economic and social empowerment.

If we analyze the data of past few years, most of the youths live distressed due to unemployment and semi-unemployment. Further owing to poverty and illiteracy, the Nepalese youths are compelled to immigrate to the Gulf and other countries hunting for labor and studies. The Nepalese youths are, thus, bound to bear the brunt of foreign lands and the exploitation and oppression by different parties. Though the youths are used for state transformation, the state, on its part, has not made any particular policy for their growth and capacity building. It will not be an exaggeration to state that the Government of Nepal has not introduced exclusive policies and programs for the entire community of the youths. Apart from that, poor, *dalit*, oppressed, backward, and marginalized youths have been far more deprived of the opportunities.

During the decade-long people's war, the rural youths were doubly affected by the army and rebels. As a result, they could not stay put and had to migrate abroad. The number of such migrants has not receded even after two years of the establishment of democracy (*loktautra*) in Nepal. Such trend of youth migration might apparently fetch some remittance for some time; however, the youth power, skill, and capability is being sorely used for economic and social empowerment of other countries. The state, in this way, is incurring double loss as the skilled labor and power as well knowledge, new thoughts and attitudes are not used in our own country. This brain drain of the youths will confine (defer) the dream of a New Nepal to sheer fantasy.

3. Youths and Legislation

International Policy: The United Nations Organization has initiated the advocacy about youths since mid-1960 in order to make their all-round development. Besides, the United Nations Organization had declared the decade of 1985 to 1995 as the International Youths Decade with a motto of "Youths for Participation, Peace and Progress." The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), 1994 held in Cairo developed people's interest in women, children, and youths. ICPD, 1999 has appealed all the member nations to execute the commitments made in 1994.

The resolution numbers 54 and 120 of General Assembly of the United Nations Organization (December 17, 1999) has requested the governments of the world to prepare and implement a youth policy which was based on the resolution recommended by the conference of the youth ministers of the world held on 8 to 12 August, 1998 in Lisbon. The General Assembly had also declared August 12 as International Youth Day (IDY) which was followed all over the world as Youth Day.

In 2000, some programs were made public including eight goals as millennium goals to be achieved by 2015. Of these various goals, compulsory education to all, gender equity, reproductive health, and fight against HIV/AIDS and similar youth policies are still found challenging. The significant documents like ICPD have introduced youth-friendly, health and reproduction programs; however, even after a decade the youths have not been able to lead a respectful life in absence of important programs like education, service, skill development, and information. Thus, it can be said that there has not been a long history of youth policies and programs right on the international level.

Qatar had held an international youth conference on the theme “Turning Policy into Action – learning from a decade of experiences in national youth policy formulation, implementation and evaluation” under the aegis of National Youth Policy International Council and Qatar Youth Council. It also held discussions on the worldwide good practice, experience, and methods of national youth policy as well as developing a plan of action, and came up with several conclusions.

4. Youth-Related Issues to be Included in the New Constitution

Basis for the Principles: Viewing the important role played by the youths in the overall development of Nepal, we can regard the international covenants ratified by Nepal after BS 2047 (1991) as an important theoretical base. This is in order to provide them opportunities to qualify for such role and constitutionally guarantee basic human rights and cater to our practical need of raising issues to be ensured in the Constitution under “Responsibilities, Policies, and Directive Principles of the State.” Nepal has already signed and ratified over 20 important international human rights treaties; besides, it has formulated Treaties Act, 2047 which has accepted the supremacy of international human rights treaties. Those treaties primarily include International Commitment for Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, 1966, International Commitment for Civil and Political Rights, 1966, International Convention to Eradicate All Types of Racial Discrimination, 1979, International Convention of Child Rights, 1989, etc. The treaties mentioned above have made ample provisions for economic, social, cultural, civil, political, environmental, and developmental rights and the like of people.

In accordance with the provision made in Clause 9 of Treatise Act, 2047, the provisions of the treaties are regarded valid to the extent that the provisions made in Nepalese laws disagree with the provisions of International Human Rights Treaties (hereafter, Treaties). If the Nepalese Acts and laws lack in proper provisions of the rights ensured in the Treaties, they should be provided by making new Acts. Moreover, those

provisions should be clarified if the same are vague. In accordance with the provisions made herein, all the Treaties signed and ratified by Nepal become Nepalese laws.

Fundamental Rights

Fundamental rights should include the following:

- Right to Independence:
- (1) Every individual shall have a right to live a dignified life.
(2) Every citizen shall have a right to freedom of thought and expression, freedom to establish a political party or organization, freedom to establish organizations, freedom to follow any occupation, employment, industry, and trade, etc.
- Right to Equality:
- (1) Every individual shall be regarded equal by the law. Nobody shall be deprived of equal protection.
(2) The state shall, in the process of using common laws, make no discrimination against any citizen on account of religion, complexion, caste, race, origin, region, physical or mental disability, gender, sexual orientation and gender identity, language or ideology or any of these issues.

However, special provisions made by the law for women, *dalits*, *adiwasis* (indigenous people)/*janjatis* (tribal people), Madhesis, farmers, laborers, children, the disabled, religious minorities, sexual and gender minorities, HIV infected, victims of conflict, economically and socially or culturally backward people shall not be regarded as prohibitions.

(3) There shall be no discrimination in remuneration (wages) and social security in terms of common work.

- Right to Protection: Every Nepali shall have a right to individual protection. The state shall make arrangements against any effect likely to occur of individual security from open borders and shall also regulate the local peace and security (law and order).
- Right to Publication, Broadcasting (Transmission) and Press: There shall be a right to publication and transmission of news, editorials, articles, features or any other readable and audiovisual materials through electronic publication, transmission, and press or any other means.
- Right to Education: There shall be a right to compulsory and free primary education for all. There shall be a right to access to technical and vocational education at secondary level by all as well as equal access to higher education.
- Right to Health Services: Every citizen shall have a right to free basic health services.
- Right to Employment: (1) There shall be a right to equal access to the employments provided by the state.

(2) The youths shall have a preferential right in employments besides development works that use local means and resources.

- Right to Development: (1) There shall be a right to ownership by the local people over the local natural means and resources and to development opportunities.
(2) The *adiwasi/janjati* youths shall have a preferential right to ownership and common access to water, forest, and land.
- There shall be a right to receiving minimum food in cases where life is at risk due to food crisis originated from excessive or no rain, famine, drought, natural or human calamities.
- Right to Social Security
- Rights to property, religion, crime against humanity, reservation, etc.

Provision for Reservation

Reservation Special Provision (For 10 years)

- Women (*dalit, janjati*, Madhesh, backward regions) – 50 percent
- Disable youths 10 – percent
- HIV/AIDS infected people or People living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) – 3 percent
- Marginalized (Raute, Chepang, Kusunda) groups, youths from backward regions – 7 percent
- Single women, third sex people (compulsory) – 5 percent

Right to Protection

The state should end the state of impunity and guarantee for security to the youths. Besides, it should increase the youths' access in security agencies.

Responsibilities, Policies, and Directive Principles of the State

The Responsibilities, Policies, and Directive Principles of the State should be as follows:

- The state shall make a policy of ensuring the proportionate representation of the youths as per their population at all levels of state policy making.

Clarification (Explanation): While making an arrangement for proportionate representation, the state shall consider the population of linguistic, racial, gender, religious, cultural, disabled, religious and sexual minorities, as well as that of backward regions and communities.

- Job guarantee to the youths as per their ability, skill, and capability

- Availability of soft loan without any collateral for the youths willing to go for self-employment
- Healthy entertainment during leisure (free time)
- Creating necessary job opportunities for the youths by the state right within the nation
- Emphasis on providing security to the national physical structures (government and nongovernmental office buildings)
- Insurance for the security of youth journalists and the youths working in national and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs and INGOs)
- Provision of one household, one employment for easy livelihood
- Strengthening the life of the landless farmers by making them owners of the land
- Formation of a separate ministry for the youths and their representation in the same
- Provision of making, implementing, and deciding about youths plans by themselves
- Youth representation in the Cabinet on the basis of the percentage of the youth members of parliament (MPs)
- Provision of sustenance allowance for people of over 60 years of age in our country in order to facilitate the livelihood of the old people
- Provision of proper unemployment allowance in order to facilitate the livelihood of the unemployed youth to some extent
- Provision of loan flow against academic certificates in order to reduce the number of educated unemployed
- Involving the women in income-generating works in order to uplift their lifestyle
- Making special programs for easy livelihood of the disabled and incapacitated people, widows and children of the society, and implementing them effectively
- Separate provision of reservation and positive discrimination by the state for the youths of backward regions and communities, and the minorities of youths from gender, complexion, racial perspectives as well as blind, disabled and mentally retarded ones.
- Compulsory participation of the youths on the board of directors of every academic institution
- Involving the youths in national development by ending the situation of migrating abroad for jobs by introducing scientific, life-oriented, and practical education and ending literate unemployment
- Provision for economic certainty for the creative works of the youths
- Increasing youth participation by expanding the scope of the Ministry of Youths and Sports in order to inculcate discipline and friendly competition in them and establish their identity on international level
- End of the tradition of administering intoxicants to the newly born babies on the basis of racial tradition
- Investment of a certain percentage of the remittances attained through foreign employment right in youth programs and fundraising activities of the youths

- Establishment of such mechanisms as Youth Information Center in villages in order to acquaint the youths with information and technology (IT)
- Including moral education and subjects of national interests in the curricula of primary, secondary and higher secondary levels in order to make the youths aware of morality (ethics) and nationality
- Safeguarding the youths' interest in sports by introducing necessary policy for the development of sports in Nepal
- Solving the problem of border encroachment (at different times in past at Kalapani, Tanakpur, Susta, Maheshpur, Bhajani, Punarbas??? Or Rehabilitation Center, Tribhuvan Basti or Settlement)
- Constitutional provision of Representation of the Far Western youths in the job opportunities right in the region
- Representation of the Far Western women, *dalits*, disabled, third sex, *adiwasis*, *janjatis*, HIV-infected people, minority youths in the development and construction works of the nation
- Ending the inner conflict among the youths for party politics and interests; ending the provision of using the youths for party and individual interests
- Adoption of an independent social security policy in order to facilitate free enterprises in the society
- Common representation of the youth artists of the Far Western region at central level in order to protect and promote their art and culture
- Establishment of Sanchargram (Media Village) on the regional level and employment banks in order to facilitate the access of the youths in information, communication, and employment
- Involving 30 percent of the semi-skilled and skilled unemployed youths of the society in industries and enterprises; compulsorily involving the youths in advocacy and programs related with federalism, state restructuring and building a new Nepal
- Creating jobs for the youths in hunting herbs, rural tourism and rural electrification
- Involving the youths in implementing scientific agricultural system and community development projects
- Providing skill-oriented training and conducting activities like rural road project, mining, etc. and mobilizing the youths in the same
- State provision for insurance for the security of all the youths
- Participation of 50 percent of the youths in making administrative, economic, judiciary, educational, and health policies
- Giving leadership of political parties, government agencies, organizations, employment creation to the youths
- Determining reserved electoral constituency for the youths
- Encouraging the unemployed youths for participation in agriculture and animal husbandry
- There shall be a right to representation of the 50 percent of youths in all the state organs, political parties, and organizations

- Creating employment opportunities for the youths right within the nation; stopping the youths from immigration as they are a special power/force of the nation; establishment of local industries and provision of youth employment therein
- Establishment of a university in each region in order to facilitate higher education in the respective region
- Provision of skill-oriented technical education as opted by those graduating from grade 8
- Proper representation of those youths who were involved or made to involve on achieving political goals instead of leaving them in the lurch after goal attainment
- Amendment in Acts and laws oriented towards foreign employment and provision of employment to the youths right in the country (through agriculture, cottage industries, and so on)
- Provision of a special foreign policy for the security of the youths involved in foreign employment an ending the policy of foreign employment in the vulnerable countries
- Including the foreign employment under the Ministry of Youths and Sports
- Provision of formal and informal/non-formal education to the illiterate youths
- Provision of modernizing agriculture
- Establishment of the employment bank on the basis of the qualifications
- Establishment of the Youth Ministry, Youth Commission and youth Information Center
- Recruiting the youths in national army and employing them for national security; establishing an alternative security force/group
- Establishment of an office in each country where the youths migrate for foreign employment and provision to guarantee their security

5. Youths' Problems / Challenges

- The state's inability to identify the youth power and consequent immigration of the youths on everyday basis to foreign countries
- Lack of categorizing the youths as poor, *dalit*, Madhesi, *adiwasi*, *janjati*, minority and backward groups; this leads to a vast (unbridgeable) gap of inequality among the youths
- Lack of a separate plan for the education, health, employment, social mobilization, skill and creativity of the youths; therefore, the unemployed youths take to drug addiction and criminal activities
- The state's inability to make proper evaluation of the thoughts, knowledge and skill of every youth and employ the same in national development; this leads to brain drain by the able and skilled human power in foreign countries
- Inability to involve the youth power that is attracted towards foreign employment in the development of own motherland
- Lack of proper moral education and national feeling; this results in increased involvement of the youths in criminal activities

- Lack of proper policies and programs that would boost up the unemployed and frustrated youth force
- Lack of developing proper aims and objectives in many youths owing to the lack of proper counseling and subsequently leading to their dilemma regarding their future career
- Dilemma among the Nepalese youths regarding their prospects owing to the non-professional educational system of Nepal
- Lack of proper management of the youths that were injured during the popular movements, people's war, and political transitions.

The constitution should clearly mention about making Acts and laws that can address the youths' problems and challenges mentioned above.

Annexes:

Annex 1:

Suggestions collected by the Relek Nepal National Committee regarding the human rights and youths' rights to be included in the new constitution 2066 Baishakh 6

1. Preamble

The Preamble should be based on Nepalese people, nation and political revolutions and uprisings.

2. Sovereignty

The Constitution should mention that the Nepalese sovereignty is manifest in the people of Nepal.

3. Duty of a Citizen

The Constitution should mention that "It shall be the duty of every citizen to follow the Constitution, be responsible to the nation and nationality and not to encroach upon others' rights while enjoying their own."

4. Fundamental Rights

The Constitution should mention that it shall include all the fundamental rights provisioned by the Interim Constitution of Nepal State, 2063 along with the following ones in the newly drafted constitution.

- **Right to Employment:**

The Constitution should mention that "*Every citizen shall have a right to employment.*" However, it should write off the sentence that they shall have a right as provisioned in the laws in the fashion of the Interim Constitution of Nepal.

- **Right to Food Sovereignty**

- **Right to Social Security**

- **Right to Development**

- **Right to Self Determination:**

The Constitution should clearly mention that “*Every citizen shall have a right to self decision in the mobilization of water, forest, and natural means and resources. No citizen, group, and political party shall have a right to self decision regarding the state division and secession.*” However, it should write off the sentence that they shall have a right as provisioned in the laws in the fashion of the Interim Constitution of Nepal

- **Rights the Workers**

- **Right to Health and Reproduction**

- **Rights of the Marginalized and Minority People and Communities**

- **Rights of the Consumers**

- **Rights of the Patients**

The Constitution should clearly mention that every citizen shall have a right to free primary treatment.

- **Right to Adult Franchise**

The Constitution should clearly mention that “*Every citizen attaining 16 years of age shall have a right to voting.*”

A mechanism should be established at local to central level for the execution of the fundamental rights

5. Responsibilities, Policies and Directive Principles of the State

- a. To effectively execute law and order, rule of law, and fundamental rights,
- b. To provision for proportionate and inclusive participation of the Madhesis, dalits, adiwasis, janjatis, women, workers, farmers, the disabled, youths, backward people and regions in all the state structures,
- c. To provision for economic and social security of the elderly, landless (squatters), kamaiyas (indented laborers), haliyas (plowmen), grazers and shepherds, minorities and other people that are economically and socially backward, and
- d. To provision for a proportionate representation of the youths in social security and employment, education as well as all the sectors of the state.

All the constitutions promulgated so far lack the term “youth,” therefore, it should be mentioned in place of women, children, and minorities.

6. Election and Election Procedure

- The election system should be mixed one, and
- The age bar for parliamentary elections should be 21 years for the candidates.

7. Basis of Federalism

Federal units should be formed on the basis of geography (location), language, population, historical background, and the availability of the economic means and resources.

8. Provisions regarding the Army

The army should be provisioned as a national army,
There should be a provision of hearing in a civil court, instead of a military court, in case of the breach of human rights by the army,
There should be a provision for enrolling all the citizens in the army, and
There should be a provision for following chair and members in **National Security Council**:

a. Prime Minister	Chair
b. Defense Minister	Member
c. Leader of the Major Opposition Party	Member

9. Constitutional Commission

The following Constitutional Commission should be constituted including all the constitutional commissions mentioned in the Interim Constitution

- National Commission for Youths
- National Commission for Women
- National Commission for Dalits

There should be a provision for mandatory inclusion of 50 percent of women in all the commissions, and

There should be a provision for 35 years of age for all the commissions and the disabled people.

10. International Treaties and Agreements

- There should be a provision for a simple majority of the central legislative regarding the signing of international treaties and agreements,
- The central government should have a right to sign the international treaties and agreements,

- There should be a provision for spontaneous execution of the treaties and agreements, and
- The laws should be formed in accordance with the treaties and agreements.

11. Judiciary

- There should be a provision for three tiers of judiciary,
 - The judges should be appointed after the parliamentary hearings on the recommendation of the Judiciary Council,
 - The judges should have attained 35 years of age, and
 - There should be a provision for removing the justice of the central court through a majority of the Central Upper House, and for removing the justice of the federal unit through a majority of the House of the respective federal unit.
- 12.** The *adiwasis*, minorities, *dalits*, *janjatis*, Madhesis ad similar communities should be scientifically categorized and included in the annexes of the Constitution.
- 13.** A referendum should be held to endorse the constitution approved of by the Constituent Assembly (CA).
- 14.** The constitution should be drafted on the basis of the suggestions and recommendations collected from the citizens.
- 15.** There should be a provision for a unicameral legislation in a federal state and a bicameral legislation in the center.
- 16.** There should be a provision for the head of state as the head of state and the Prime Minister as the Executive Head.
- 17.** Regarding the youths
- There should be a provision for guaranteed participation of the youths (16-35 years) in policy and decision-making levels of the state on the basis of their population, and
 - There should be a provision for practical, professional (vocational), scientific, job-oriented, goal-oriented, work-friendly, anti-exploitative, easily accessible and free education.

Annex 2:

“Change (Transformation) is Possible.”

“Youths Have to Shoulder the Responsibility of Building a New Nepal.”

Nepal Youths Social Forum – 2065, Biratnagar

2065 Paush 15 and 16

Saraswati Higher Secondary School, Janakipath, Biratnagar

Biratnagar Youth Declaration

Accepting the fact that all the changes so far have been made possible through the youths,

Respecting the youths’ role in changing the history,

Reiterating the strong commitment of building a just, peaceful, and prosperous new Nepal as imagined by the youths,

Keeping in mind that the change is possible, that change is possible only through the youths, and we the youths are responsible towards our nation in the process of heading towards giving continuity to the significant history,

We, ten thousand youths, assembled from fifty districts of Nepal, issue the Biratnagar Declaration.

Common Issues of Youths

1. Youths need identity, access, and representation (3 p) in the present context. The state should ensure the establishment of real identity of the youths, common access in state mechanism, and dignified representation in all levels and agencies of the state and political parties by making laws, policies and programs.
2. Youths are not only the bearers of the change, they are also partner to development. Therefore, the tradition of making the youths the shotguns of the leaders should be ended and their participation at the level of decision-making should be ascertained on the basis of their qualifications and ability.

3. The country, at the moment, is heading towards carving a constitution. The Constituent Assembly (CA) and different committees should make arrangements for a separate and special counseling with the youth community at the rural to nation levels in order to include their common issues.
4. Discussions and debates should be held in all the districts in order to include the issues of the youths belonging to different regions, levels, classes, genders, and castes in making national youth policies. It is imperative to hold a regular interaction with civil society in making national youth policies. The national youth policies should be formed immediately in tandem with the civil society and should be implemented at the earliest.
5. The state should immediately initiate effective and special programs for the rehabilitation and reunion of the youths that were victimized by the armed conflict and various forms of violence.
6. There should be a constitutional provision for giving a right to cast votes, contest in the elections, and qualify for appointments in all the agencies and organs of the state after attaining citizenship at the age of 16.
7. The common issues of youths like access to education, employment, information and technology, and HIV/AIDS, livelihood skill should be identified, and prioritized on the regional level, and programs should be formed and implemented accordingly.
8. The present educational system should be immediately changed and replaced by a vocational and practical system in order to ensure employment to the unemployed youths.
9. A minimum of five percent of total national budget should be sanctioned to the heading "Youths." Such amount should be spent over youth development only.

Issues Regarding State Restructure, Constituent Assembly and Livelihood of Citizens

10. The political parties should be restructured from local to central levels in order to ensure the common youth participation in policy making as well as for a fully democratic exercise in the parties.
11. The political parties have not propounded a clear concept regarding the state restructuring and federalism. Common people have not yet discussed, debated or interacted regarding this. Therefore, the political parties should come up with a clear concept regarding the basis of making unions ??? (federal states), division of natural means and resources, and universally accepted bases for division of federal states. The role of the members of the Constituent

Assembly should be that of a facilitator rather than of creating conflicts regarding federalism.

12. A collective and comprehensive solidarity campaign should be launched to end all forms of discrimination, injustice, inequality and violence on the basis of caste, class, region, gender, age, and social and cultural structure. No issue should be confined to a particular group or region; all the issues should be a part of the collective and comprehensive solidarity campaign of all the Nepalese citizens. Then alone can we uphold human rights, social justice, peace, respect, and equality.
13. The nation has very weak governance. Civil security is on decline. Social security has not been a state priority. Therefore, the state should make immediate and effective policies regarding the good governance, and civil and social security. This alone would form the basis for a state accountable to people.
14. The new constitution should provision for special counseling with the people of special groups, communities, and classes in order to include the issues relating Muslims, backward people, and minorities. The Constituent Assembly should facilitate in conducting a series of civil advocacy in the leadership of the citizens of the related communities in order to make the constitution drafting a participatory enterprise.
15. Foreign aids is a right rather than a charity. It should be unconditional. No one can impose their thoughts and ideologies on the ground of providing foreign aids. There should be a provision for regular supervision and making public all foreign aids by the media, civil society, and youths in order to establish a tradition of regulating and systematic monitoring and assessment those aids.
16. The citizens' right to information as guaranteed by the Information Act, with a view to discouraging corruption and making people holding different positions of the state accountable to the people, should be practically implemented. The works and activities of all the state organs and agencies should be made transparent through a reliable public auditing of their decisions, programs, and budgets.
17. The ministers, members of parliament, members of different committees and those holding positions in constitutional organs as well as high officials start living a lavish and autocratic lifestyle at the cost of expensive services and facilities, different from a commoner. The political parties and people holding public positions should come up with a public commitment to end such a luxurious life.

18. Jobs should be created for the youths through a maximum use of natural means and resources in the spirit of “Water, Forest, and Land should Belong to the Youths for a Long-term Solution to the Employment Problem.”

Finally,

This Declaration is oriented towards the entire state and youths. The Nepal Youths Social Forum – 2065, Biratnagar strongly demands that the government, political parties, civil society and stakeholders take initiatives to execute the same with due priority.