

EVALUATION OF NEHRU YUVA KENDRA SCHEME

- A Quick Study, *March 1991*

1. The Study

In 1960s, in view of growing incidence of student unrest, the Government of India thought of formulating an integrated Youth Service Programme. The National Advisory Board on youth recommended taking up of national programme for non-student youth. It also recommended setting-up of one district youth centre and two block centres in every district. As part of Silver Jubilee Year of India's Independence the youth centres at the district level called Nehru Yuva Kendras (NYKs) were established in 1972-73. The NYKs had the objective of providing the rural non-student youth avenues to take part in the process of national development and opportunities for the development of their personality and skills.

At the instance of Planning Commission, a quick study of Nehru Yuva Kendra Scheme was conducted by the Programme Evaluation Organisation in August - September, 1990.

2. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were the following:

- i) to review the activities of the Nehru Yuva Kendras towards generating awareness, taking up development programmes and building up an organisational set up,
- ii) to examine the extent of coverage of the target group rural youths under the scheme,
- iii) to find out the linkages obtained under the scheme with development programmes taken up by other departments,
- iv) to study the effectiveness of administrative and financial support for the scheme at various levels and identify the problems encountered in the implementation of the scheme,
- v) to assess the impact of the scheme on the socio-economic fabric of the community, and
- vi) to suggest ways and measures to make the scheme more effective.

3. Sample Size/Criteria for Sample Selection

NYK Scheme was in operation in all the States and Union Territories. The states of Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir and Manipur were excluded from the study, due to disturbed conditions in those states. Further, States and Union Territories having 5 or less than 5 NYKs were also excluded. Thus, the study was taken up in 15 states.

On the basis of 5 percent sample of the total number of 401 NYKs in operation in the country, 21 NYKs were selected for the study. The NYKs were distributed among the selected 15 states in proportion to the total number of NYKs accounted by each with a minimum of one NYK from each state. The selected NYKs were 3 each from Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, 2 each from Bihar and Rajasthan and one each from remaining 11 states viz. Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Orissa, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal.

4. Reference Period

The field work was conducted during August-September, 1990

5. Main Findings

1. There were glaring anomalies in the salaries of the Youth Coordinators and they did not feel secure in their job as funds were sanctioned on year to year basis.
2. Eighty one per cent of the Youth Coordinators were still not confirmed. This has led to uncertainty of their job.
3. The common problem in monitoring the programme was lack of mobility and limited fuel funds sanctioned to the Regional Coordinators.
4. There were many weaknesses in the administrative set up of NYK having direct bearing on its performance. There was no separate budget for the Regional Coordinators and there was practically no manual to provide guidance regarding programme activities and administration of NYKs. The absence of women workers was another weakness of the programme.
5. One of the weakest aspect of the NYK Scheme had been the lack of proper linkage with other development activities at the operational level (District/Block). Eighty per cent of the Collectors had informed that there were no adequate linkages between the activities of the NYKs and other development programmes at the district level.

6. The two main reasons for limited linkage were the lack of well defined coordination with other departments and lack of time at the disposal of Collectors.
7. As many as 96.4 percent of the knowledgeable persons of the selected villages had expressed their desire that Youth Clubs must continue as they were assisting the Panchayats in their day-to- day functioning and in creating awareness among the people about development programmes, helping in creating assets in the villages and developing organisational skill of the non-student youths in the villages in sports and cultural activities.
8. Twenty-four per cent of NYK fund could catalyse seventy-six per cent, i.e. it could generate more than three times the original amount, reflected the motivation and development spirit among the members of the Youth Club.
9. The NYK Scheme, in the District, had remained peripheral because of its infrastructure, meager funds and few activities. It could not effectively invite the active cooperation of other Departments.
10. Although Youth Clubs had been the most important activity of the Scheme and played a pivotal role, yet about 40 per cent youth clubs during 1987-90 had not been active.
11. The Youth Clubs members included all classes of society including Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Women.
12. The popularity of the NYK Scheme and its acceptance among the village Youths was observed from the fact that 82.3 per cent of the members of Youth Clubs were non-student rural youth and 96 per cent were below 35 years of age.
13. The people in the villages recognised the activities of the Youth Clubs and were willingly contributing to it both in cash and kind.
14. Nearly 86 per cent of the Collectors were aware of the role and function of the scheme and the activities taken up by them.
15. Nearly all the knowledgeable respondents and members of the Youth Club (both old and new) were aware of the activities of the Youth Clubs. The Youth Club members pointed out that inadequate help and guidance were the major deficiencies in the working of the Youth Clubs and suggested that for its smooth functioning, it would be necessary to have team spirit and motivation among members.

16. The NYK Scheme made a dent and its usefulness, particularly in taking up constructive activities, like Youth Leadership Training Programme (YLTP) National Integration Camps, Social Services, etc., was felt in almost all the villages. In many cases, Youth Clubs extended their helping hand to village Panchayats in solving local disputes as also in taking up works, like construction of village ponds and paths, sanitation, social services, etc.
17. The programmes under the Scheme, individually and collectively conveyed composite messages on issues of relevance to rural Youth. This helped them in development of the ability to perceive their problems and tackle them democratically and collectively.
18. The importance of the Scheme laid in having created awareness among village youths about their environment, national issues, national values, development programmes and activities.

6. Major Suggestions

1. For the better functioning of the Nehru Yuva Kendra, it is imperative that the anomalies in the pay should be removed in all the cases and Youth Coordinators be given some respectable position so that they can have better linkages with other district level officers.
2. Evaluation and monitoring the programmes should be related to the objectives of the Scheme and its format should contain not only quantitative reporting but also qualitative substance of the programme.
3. It had been felt that training of the Nehru Yuva kendra's personnel and other functionaries and refresher courses would definitely bear rich fruits.
4. The linkage with other development departments were inadequate. There is, therefore, need for formulation of guidelines at the planning stage of different rural development programmes, in such a way that the Youth Clubs, which are an organised voluntary association of non-student youths, are involved in the formulation and execution of all such programmes.
5. The scheme is good and has succeeded in generating a high level of awareness among rural youth about the scope, content and weaknesses of the programme as well as nature and needs of development. It must be encouraged and regular flow of funds in place of year to year basis may be ensured.

6. To encourage the participation of weaker sections in the activities of Nehru Yuva Kendras the programme contents may be suitably structured to meet their requirements.
7. Through the provision of better administrative, financial and infrastructural support it might be possible to provide an atmosphere wherein the Nehru Yuva Kendra Scheme might create a better impact on the socio-economic conditions of the community.
8. It is, therefore, suggested that for better functioning of the scheme, a mechanism needs to be developed to ensure regular flow of funds, adequate linkages with development departments, and other infrastructural support in a coordinated manner.