UNIT 13  POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT*

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13.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this Unit, you would be able to:

- Explain the concept of positive youth development (PYD);
- Describe the key attributes of PYD;
- Explain the various theories and models of PYD;
- Understand the PYD programmes from a positive psychology perspective;
- Describe specific PYD programmes in India and International context; and
- Point out the different aspects of evaluation of PYD programmes.

13.2 INTRODUCTION

When we think of the youth, what is the image that usually comes? Most of you would be in the youth stage of life. What exactly is the age group of youth? What characteristics do they possess? Do they live with parents or independently? Do they study or do they work, or are they doing both simultaneously? Or are they neither in school nor doing any work? What are the issues and challenges do they face? What are their aspirations, potentials, and dreams? Do we find any...
difference in the characteristics and development of youth in relation to their gender, socio economic status, cultural background? Do their health condition, disability if any, and their sexual orientation affect their development, sense of identity and well-being? Do they have their own personal value system?

The United Nations defines youth, for statistical purposes, as between 15 to 24 years of age. It recognizes that youth is a fluid state as the age group may vary across societies and cultures. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), young people consists of 10 – 24 years of age group which includes adolescents (10-19 years of age), and youth (15-24 years of age). The UNICEF in its Convention on Rights of the Child, defines a child as upto 18 years of age. Legally also the Government of India considers an individual as a child till 18 years of age. The National Youth Policy 2014 of India has described youth as between 15-29 years of age. It has been estimated that the total youth population of India (15-24 years) is going to increase to 25 crores in the year 2021 (National Commission on Population, 2019). That is why India is considered to be a young country as the population of young people is more.

There are variations in the age range that marks the stage of youth. However, it is universally described as a transitional phase between childhood and adulthood. There is a movement from dependence stage of childhood towards independence of adulthood.

According to Erikson’s (1994) psychosocial theory of development, one crucial task in the stage of adolescence is to establish a sense of identity. The crisis that the adolescents face during this stage of development is identity versus role confusion. As they go through various changes in physical, cognitive, moral, social and emotional dimensions, they try to gain a sense of understanding of their self. This identity development is influenced by the dynamic interaction between the adolescent as an individual and the varied contexts and situations in which they live and function.

Alongwith developing a sense of identity, the young people need to achieve other developmental tasks also, e.g., successful completion of education, getting into a decent job and career, forming romantic relationship, learning interpersonal skills, acquiring workplace values and attitudes, being more self-reliant, being socially responsible, and contributing to the community. They gradually move towards greater psychological and economic independence. However, there may be variations in the rate in which these are attained by the youth. For instance, the rural and tribal youth may achieve economic independence sooner than the urban youth who may be continuing their education for longer time and still exploring their career options. Hence it is important to consider the sociocultural context of the young people while trying to develop an understanding of them and planning for their betterment and well-being.

Definitely youth is a major stage in the human life span where a lot of changes happen simultaneously and peer, family and the community exert significant influence. The youth may be faced with various challenges related to these influences such as abuse, conflicts, domestic violence, negative peer pressure, substance use, bullying, anxiety and various mental health conditions also. For instance, with regard to suicide, youth (18 and above- below 30 years) is one of the vulnerable groups with 33% share of total police recorded suicide cases
(MoSPI, 2017). The youth needs to learn skills to navigate these adverse impacts on development.

At the same time, the youth is also full of potential, energy, dreams, ambitions and desire to achieve and excel. We have many examples of people in all walks of life who have succeeded and fulfilled their dreams despite all odds. Hence there needs to be a three-pronged approach to youth development: intervention (focusing on remediation), preventive (focusing on at-risk youth and preventing adverse consequences) and positive development approach (focusing on all youth developing their character strengths and skills). Thus positive youth development is based on building up of positive experiences and positive traits in the youth, and creating a positive culture in major sociocultural institutions in the life of the youth such as family and school.

Supporting youth and preparing them for adulthood is a key focus for governments, policies and programs (Lerner et al., 2018). Positive Youth Development (PYD) is an approach to supporting youth, which believes that all young people can develop positively and provides avenues for this to occur (Benson, Scales, Hamilton, & Sesma 2007).

**Indian success stories despite all odds**

- **Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam**, a great scientist and the eleventh President of India, was born in a poor family and had to distribute newspapers after school.

- **Sushil Kumar**, famous Indian wrestler who has won medals in Olympics came from a lower-middle class family and had lack of proper diet, training facilities and finance, but overcame all odds to become world champion.

- **Sudha Chandran**, the internationally famous classical Bharatnatyam dancer, had to got her leg amputated at the age of 16. With a prosthetic
‘Jaipur foot’ and her sheer dedication and determination, she defeated her disability and thrived.

- Gautam Adani, the Founder of Adani Group had to drop out of his education due to lack of finance. However, he challenged all adversities and earned his first million by the age of 20 years.
- Girish Sharma, lost his one leg as a kid, but went on to become a badminton champion with just one leg.
- H. Boniface Prabhu, a Padma Shri awardee by the government of India in 2014, is a famous quadriplegic tennis player who had become quadriplegic at the age of four.
- Javed Abidi, the founder of the Disability Rights Group in India, had spina bifida and had to be wheelchair-bound by age 15. But he was not bound by his limitations and pursued his dreams is an activist in the field of disability.

Success stories at global level

- Marc Zupan, gold medallist in Paralympic, was quadriplegic after accident.
- Victor Frankl, is the author of best seller “Man’s Search for Meaning”, and key theorist of existential theoretical approach in psychology. He suffered extreme torture in Nazi concentration camps where his wife and family were killed.
- Albert Einstein is considered as a genius and is the Nobel prize winner in physics. However, he was jobless after his studies for long.
- Tom Cruise, one of the greatest and highest paid actor, received Academy awards and Golden Globe awards. He was surrounded by poverty, abusive father in early years.
- Oprah Winfrey, famous for her award winning talk show ‘The Oprah Winfrey Show’ is considered the greatest black philanthropist. She was raised in poverty by a single mother, was raped in her childhood, and faced severe hardship.

13.3 DEFINING POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT (PYD)

The youth are a very important asset of any nation. So what are the goals the society envisages for the youth? What vision and approach does a nation have towards their youth? The dominant approach earlier was to view the youth as problematic (e.g., ‘the angry young man’ portrayal in the earlier Bollywood movies or the image of the youth as falling prey to use of drugs and alcohol and going astray) and their issues needed to be solved. However, the absence of problems and illness does not mean there is presence of wellness (Ryff & Singer, 1996, p. 14). Steps may be taken to reduce the problems and challenges to be solved.
However, this itself does not suffice to help the youth to self actualize and move towards fulfillment, empowerment and positive contribution towards the society. This requires a focus on the development of positive attributes and strengths of the youth.

It is important to address the problems and issues of the youth. However, problem-free does not mean that the youth are prepared to face life effectively, have acquired good character values, realized their full potential, are empowered and engaged, and meaningfully contribute to the society. Optimal psychological well-being requires one to go beyond the mere absence of mental illness. Rather than just being disease free or problem free, parents want their children to be safe, healthy, happy, moral, fully engaged in life, and productive contributors to the communities in which they live (Noddings, 2003).

The traditional medical model of health focuses on the absence of psychological distress and disorder. However, equal attention needs to be paid to the other side also focusing on the psychological well-being and positive functioning of individuals. Thus positive youth development brings in a balanced perspective by emphasizing the positive attributes in the youth and highlighting the person-context interaction in helping the youth to excel and thrive. It acknowledges assets along with problems, that is, takes into account the risk factors but at the same time capitalizes on the protective factors in the life of the youth. As Damon (2004) has stated, positive youth development recognizes the good in (young people, focusing on each and every child’s unique talents, strengths, interests, and future potential. It aims mainly at understanding, educating, and engaging children in productive activities rather than at correcting, curing, or treating them for maladaptive tendencies or so-called disabilities (Seligman et al., 2005).

Positive youth development (PYD) thus derives from positive psychology perspective and follows a strengths based approach focusing on assets and competence of the youth. It is multidisciplinary in nature as youth and their well-being related to different aspects are concerns of varied disciplines such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, social work, economics, public administration etc. In line with the principles of positive psychology, PYD includes not only the at-risk young people, but also all adolescents and youth. It aims at achieving the potential for all, providing positive experience and creating a positive relationship and a positive environment to the individual.

![Fig.13.2: Aspects of Positive Youth Development](image)

### 13.3.1 Principles of Positive Youth Development

1. All youth have the inherent capacity for positive growth and development. They are naturally resilient and can thrive in the face of adversity.
2. Resiliency, however, operates in a context and is influenced by environmental factors. Support and care from family and other external contexts moderate the adverse impact of events and help make the youth more hardy and resilient. This indicates a positive developmental trajectory and highlights the importance of the protective factors in the life of the youth.

3. Protective factors thus include assets related to both individual (e.g., personality traits, attitudes, character strengths etc.) and the environment (e.g., family relationship, role models, school belongingness, opportunities to pursue one’s interests/hobbies etc.). Benson (1997) has talked about 40 developmental assets which you will learn in detail in later section.

4. There is a dynamic relationship between the individual assets and the environmental characteristics including the contexts and ecologies. These interact with the risk factors present in the life of an individual to determine if s/he will thrive or succumb. Hence it is important that the positive youth development programmes focus on developing various positive attributes/assets.

5. Thus it is important that the youth functions in nutrient rich relationships, contexts, and ecologies. All youth are benefitted from this including the at-risk youths.

6. Community plays a significant role and a ‘critical delivery system’ for positive youth development.

Thus positive youth development is a comprehensive system where the youth can play a major role themselves. The core ideas and concepts in PYD (Benson, Scales, Hamilton, & Sesman, 2006) consist of:

- Developmental contexts or the Community (the ecology) - which includes the family, school, peer group, neighbourhoods, workplace, clubs, programs etc.
- Nature of the child with inherent capacity to grow and thrive (the developmental strengths) – the positive traits and qualities in the youth
- Reduction of high-risk behavior and promotion of health, well-being and thriving

13.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS AND MODELS OF PYD

Earlier approaches to the study of adolescence characterized it as a period of ‘storm and stress’ as indicated by Stanley Hall. The dominant perception of major theoretical frameworks was that the life of adolescents was beset with various problems due to the transitional nature of this phase. Hence the objective was to deal with the problems and hence ‘fixing the problems’ was the main approach. Research focused on adjustment problems, health related issues, mental disorders, conditions of poverty, discrimination and deprivation etc. However, gradually there was a change in the approaches to the study of adolescence and youth. Similar to a coin having two sides, researchers started paying attention to the other side where the young were found to have talents, potentials, aspirations
and could thrive despite several odds in their lives. Thus focus was more on positive strengths in the individuals, in their environment and the dynamic interaction between them.

This led to a shift from the pathological orientation to positive growth orientation in the study of adolescents and youth, and positive youth development emerged as one of the positive approaches (Tolan et al., 2016). It talked about optimal development of the young people rather than just okay or good enough development. There was a shift from viewing the youth in terms of their incapacities/problems to having potentials, from deficit approach to strengths approach. Thus the positive youth development addressed not only the youths at risk, but also all the youth because they are considered as significant resources, which a nation cannot afford to neglect. It takes a holistic approach of the youth by studying them as embedded in the context of their ecologies which play an important role in the youth development. The youth are not just problems to be solved or fixed but they are full of potentials which need to be realized by paying attention to the dynamic interaction between them and their sociocultural context.

13.4.1 Theoretical Frameworks of Positive Youth Development

Three theoretical frameworks have been suggested underlying the Positive youth development (Benson et al., 2006):

1. **Theory of Human Development**

   The human development theory focuses on the inherent potential of human beings. It posits that the youth are capable of positive development which includes two aspects: individual well-being and social well-being. That is, the youth are able to realize all potentials within themselves and they also contribute to the greater social good. Thus the theory identifies the possibility of active and constructive contribution to the development of self, community, and society (Benson et al., 2006). It highlights the interplay between the individual and their contextual factors and ecologies which influence the developmental pathway of the individual. There is a bidirectional relationship between the person and the context. Both influence each other.

2. **The Theory of Context and Community Influence**

   The theory highlights the dynamic role of contexts in influencing positive youth development. Most important theory here is the ecological systems theory of Bronfenbrenner (1979) which talks about different layers of systems or contexts in the life of an individual that affect development. It ranges from the immediate influence of systems of family, school, peer and neighbourhood to distal systems of political, social, religious and cultural institutions and the particular historical context in which the individual is living. For instance, in the current 21st century times, technology is exerting a greater influence on almost all aspects of our life and subsequently has an impact on our well-being.

   These developmental contexts are interdependent in nature, e.g., what happens in family may influence the classroom transactions, or political happenings at the nation level can influence the functioning of school etc.
Further, studies have also identified certain features of the positive developmental contexts/settings that can facilitate the building of assets by the youth. NRCIM (2002) reports eight features related to the daily life settings and experiences of adolescents which have been found to help promote positive youth development (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2002). These features can be considered as “active ingredients” of community development programmes for the youth. These are described in the Table 13.1.

Table 13.1: Eight Features of Positive Developmental Settings (NRCIM, 2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical and psychological safety</td>
<td>The developmental setting needs to be free from any harm, abuse, violence, and other stressful experiences. It needs to provide a sense of safety in both physical and psychological terms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate structure</td>
<td>The environment needs to provide clear rules, boundaries and guidelines for the development of the child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive relationships</td>
<td>There needs to be secure attachment with the family members and a caring and nurturing atmosphere.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities to belong</td>
<td>An atmosphere of inclusion, engagement and integration needs to prevail and discrimination on the basis of diversity of youth needs to be avoided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive social norms</td>
<td>It focuses on the importance of social values and morals for proper development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for efficacy and mattering</td>
<td>The developmental setting needs to offer opportunities to exercise independence, taking responsibility and engaging in meaningful challenge. It needs to develop a sense of being taken seriously or mattering.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities for skill building</td>
<td>The setting needs to offer opportunities to develop skills and competencies related to personal, cognitive, academic, social, emotional and vocational aspects. It emphasizes developing the human capital in all arenas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration of family, school and community efforts</td>
<td>There needs to be a harmonious relationship and interaction among the three crucial aspects of a child’s life – family, school and community.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus these features of developmental setting of the youth will create positive atmosphere and lead to asset building in the youth. All the stakeholders in the developmental context of the youth need to work toward the common goal of achieving positive youth development.
including positive experiences, positive relationships and positive contributions of the youth.

3. **The Theory of Context and Community Change**

This theory addresses the issue of how does the change occur. Now we know what are the ingredients that can lead to positive youth development and the positive outcomes out of these. But the question is ‘how does change occur’? In this regard, we first need to consider the *will* to change and the *capacity* to change (Granger, 2002). Various intervention strategies can address this. Secondly, there needs to be a *developmentally attentive community* (Benson et al., 2003, p.389), that helps in asset-building across multiple contexts to facilitate the change process. This requires using strategies to make a vibrant community where there is interaction among all the members across age and sectors such as schools, clubs, organizations etc.

13.4.2 **Models of Positive Youth Development**

Several models of positive youth development guide the community programmes on PYD. These models assume that the adolescents and youth have the potential to thrive despite this stage of development considered as a stage of struggle and challenges on many counts including their personal development, academic, vocational and relationship aspects. Positive youth development recognizes and focuses on the strengths, resources and potential of young people, and works to build young people’s skills and engage them in communities (Lerner, 2004). Thus positive youth development can inform the development and implementation of effective PYD programmes.

Four such models are described below.

- **Developmental assets model (Benson et al., 2011)**
  The model talks about 40 developmental assets, 20 internal and 20 external which combined together helps create positive experiences and well-being for the youth. Internal assets refer to the personal traits or qualities such as positive identity, social and emotional competencies, commitment to learning etc. which help the youth which guide the youth in positive direction and make proper choices and decisions. External assets include the external world around the youth consisting of family members, neighbours, community etc. which provide support, care, guidance and encouragement etc. which can help empower the youth to progress and thrive.

- **The 5Cs/6Cs Model (Lerner et al., 2011)**
  It focuses on the following aspects - competence, confidence, connection, character, care, and the added 6th C of contribution. Each C consists of a number of attributes/qualities which indicate positive development (Lerner et. al., 2005).

  a) Competence: a sense of capability in specific areas such as academic, cognitive, vocational and social

  b) Confidence: a global sense of self-worth and self-efficacy
Role of Psychology in Positive Growth Across Life Span

c) Connection: a positive and reciprocal relationship with family, peers, school and community

d) Character: includes morality, value system and integrity

e) Care: involves having sympathy and empathy for others

f) Contribution: refers to the outcomes of all the other Cs which lead the youth to enhance their own development as well as contribute to the larger society as a result of these processes.

Thus the 5C/6Cs model describes a thriving youth in terms of these six aspects. It has been widely studied and the five Cs are viewed as indicators of thriving (King et. al., 2005). It is used as a theoretical model to design a programme or as outcomes to be achieved (e.g., Mercier et. al., 2019).

- **The Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Model by CASEL**

  This model emphasizes the acquisition of social and emotional competencies which are significant for effective functioning in life. It includes intrapersonal competencies such as self awareness, self management and motivation; and interpersonal competencies such as social awareness, empathy and relationship skills. The SEL model is provided by the Collaborative of Academic Social and Emotional Learning (casel.org).

- **‘Being’ Model of PYD**

  The ‘being’ model focuses on ‘being’ rather than ‘doing’, that is, acquiring skills and achieving things. It highlights the individuality of the youth, emphasizing on their character strengths, values, spirituality, meaning and purpose in life.

### Self Assessment Questions 1

1. The National Youth Policy 2014 of India has described youth as between _________ years of age.

2. According to Erikson, the crisis during adolescence stage of development is called as ________________.

3. There needs to be a three-pronged approach to youth development: intervention, preventive and ________________ approach.

4. What is the criticism of the traditional medical model of health?

5. Assets are related to both individual and the ________________.

6. What are the 6 Cs?

### 13.5 KEY ATTRIBUTES OF PYD

Catalano et al. (2004) have described 15 key constructs or attributes of positive youth development. These attributes have been derived inductively based on 77 PYD programs with positive outcomes. Further, these attributes reflect the conceptualization of PYD in different models described in the earlier section.
The 15 PYD attributes are given in the Table 13.2 below.

Table 13.2: 15 Attributes of Positive Youth Development (Catalano et. al., 2004)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Explanation of the Attribute</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Bonding</td>
<td>good relationships with peers and adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Resilience</td>
<td>competence to overcome adversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Cognitive competence</td>
<td>ability to think logically, creatively, and critically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Social competence</td>
<td>ability to maintain good social relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Emotional competence</td>
<td>ability to manage emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Moral competence</td>
<td>ability to make sound moral judgment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Behavioural competence</td>
<td>ability to take skillful verbal and non-verbal actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Positive and healthy self-identity</td>
<td>having positive self-perceptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Self-determination</td>
<td>ability to take age-appropriate action by oneself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Self-efficacy</td>
<td>belief that one has abilities and is able to attain goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Optimism</td>
<td>belief in the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Promotion of pro-social norms</td>
<td>developing pro-social behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Pro-social involvement</td>
<td>engagement in pro-social behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Appreciation of young people’s positive behavior</td>
<td>desirable behavior of young people is properly recognized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Spirituality</td>
<td>having good relationship with oneself, others, and higher being</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13.6 POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

The concept of positive youth development (PYD) is understood in at least three interrelated but nevertheless different ways: (1) as a developmental process, (2) as a philosophy or approach to youth programming, and (3) as instances of youth programs and organizations focused on fostering the healthy or positive development of youth (Hamilton, 1999).

Thus PYD as a developmental process talks about the key attributes that the youth need to develop (discussed in previous section 13.5). In this section, PYD is discussed as an approach that can inform the development of youth programmes, and also highlights specific programmes who focus on PYD outcomes.
Positive youth development programmes are based on positive psychology perspective. Positive psychology provides the PYD a broad goal of helping the youth to thrive. What do we mean by thriving adolescent and youth? One aspect of it focuses on developing individual psychological characteristics which can include mainly character strengths, competencies, positive emotions, flow, and life satisfaction (Seligman et al., 2005). Thus it envisions a young person who living in the context of proper available health and safety, experiences more positive affect than negative affect, who is satisfied with his or her life as it has been lived, who has identified what he or she does well and uses these talents and strengths in a variety of fulfilling pursuits; and who is a contributing member of a social community (Seligman et al., 2005). In short, the youth is able to fulfill all their potentials, experience positive affect, is an engaged member of community and contributes meaningfully to the society. The PYD programmes broadly include skill building opportunities, positive relationships and opportunities for leadership and empowerment (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2016).

There are three components that the PYD programmes need to consider in designing an effective programme: the person, the context/environment related factors, and the interaction between the two. The developmental and cultural settings of the youth play a powerful role in enhancing their potential and well-being. The individual characteristics of the youth interact with the features of these settings including family, school, neighbourhood and community that can result in positive outcome or otherwise. There needs to be an appropriate fit between personal, developmental and sociocultural conditions of particular youths. You have learned about Bronfenbrenner’s theory in this regard in earlier section.

**13.6.1 Specific PYD Programs**

Society has always focused on addressing the needs of the youth, preparing themselves to become good citizens, and developing them into disciplined individuals with good character, moral values, and contributing to the collective good. The Government of India has established an exclusive Department of Youth Affairs and Sports in the International Year of Youth in 1985 which subsequently was turned into a separate Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports in 2000. The latest National Youth Policy (NYP, 2014) of the government of India envisions empowering the youth for contributing in the nation-building process. Towards this end, it advocates for a holistic development of the youth focusing on their health, education, sports, skill development for employment opportunities, engagement of the youth in community, public institutions, governance, policies and social justice areas. The National Adolescent Health Strategy (Rashtriya Kishore Swasthya Karyakram) is a major programme of the government of India.

Various programmes and initiatives have been taken for the development of the youth and making them an integral part of the nation building exercise, e.g., the Scouts and Guides at school level, National cadet corps (NCC) and National service scheme (NSS) at college level, YMCA, YWCA etc. The Rotary Club and Lions Club also aim at building character, values and service attitude among the young. Various life skills based programmes such as life skills education (LSE) aim at equipping the youth with necessary skills and capabilities to grow optimally and become productive members of the society. Thus the programmes aim at developing the personalities and character of the youth and enabling them to
become useful, productive and contributing members of the society. The youth have a right as well as an obligation to participate actively in shaping the destiny of the nation (Youth in India, 2017).

PYD programmes can be of three types in general such as *promotion, preventive* and *remedial* in nature. Thus they can help promote or enhance good values and attitudes in the youth. They can also be used to prevent the negative impact of risk factors in the youth, and/or to remediate or bring in changes in the youth and also suitable modifications in the environment of the youth.

Given below in the box are some widely recognized programmes on positive youth development which aims at reducing problems in young people and/or promoting their optimal development and psychological well-being.

- **National Young Leaders Programme (NYLP):** aims at developing leadership qualities among the youth to enable them to participate and contribute optimally in the development and progress of the nation.
- **Neighbourhood Youth Parliament (NYP):** make the youth aware about the socio-economic-political issues and concerns related to the youth and communities in general.
- **Youth for Development programme (YFDP):** involves youth in ‘shramadaan’, i.e., voluntary labour in communities which helps develop the youth personality and a sense of dignity of labour in them.
- **Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS):** It has centres all over India and undertakes activities related to varied issues of literacy, sanitation, family welfare, social issues, rehabilitation, justice, environment, entrepreneurship etc. so that the youth are engaged in the development of their own community and country.
- **Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development (RGNiyD) at Sriperumbudur, Tamil Nadu, established under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, is a deemed University and an apex institution in the area of youth development. It is playing a seminal role in the teaching, research, training and extension activities related to youth development, functioning and well-being.**

Various other programmes/facilities/schemes of the Government of India to provide opportunities to the youth for the development of their personality, character, skills and community engagement include National Programme for Youth and Adolescent Development (NPYAD), Tribal Youth Exchange Programme, Youth Hostels across the country, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Prime Minister’s Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP), Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY). Various private and non-governmental agencies (NGOs), (e.g., Azim Premzi Foundation, Teach for India,3L Concept, a Mumbai based research organization that provides indigenous positive youth development programme for K-12 education, higher education and technical education) are also involved in the area of youth development, participation and engagement of the youth in their own growth as well as that of the nation.
**International Scenario**

a) The United Nations has declared the year of 1985 as the International Year of Youth with the theme “participation, development, and peace” in recognition of the crucial role of the youth locally, nationally and globally. The various agencies of the UN also undertake youth-related plans and actions. For instance, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) considers youth as agents of change, social transformations, peace and sustainable development (Youth in India, 2017) and undertakes varied activities towards this. The UN also has United Nations Volunteers Programme which empowers the youth to engage in their own capacity development, actualization of potentials, and also be the harbingers of change in the larger society and policy level.

b) SEL (Social and Emotional Learning): It is a widely used and researched programme by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) (casel.org). It aims at promoting the social and emotional competencies of school students by establishing evidence-based practices. The goal is to address the child as a whole, and equip them to succeed in school as well as later in life by developing necessary skills and competencies related to academic performance, emotion management, prosocial behavior, interpersonal relationship etc.

c) PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies, Greenberg & Kusche, 1998): It is a school-based programme (30-45 sessions) aiming at development of social and emotional competence. It consists of activities related to self-awareness, self-control and social problem-solving.

d) Penn Resiliency Programme (Gillham & Reivich, 2004): It is a school-based programme including 12 sessions focusing on preventing depression among children and adolescents by using cognitive and behavioural skills.

e) Project P.A.T.H.S.: A PYD programme in Hong Kong, has been developed and rigorously evaluated and the findings based on different strategies showed that the project protected young people from risk behavior and promoted their thriving (e.g., Catalano et al., 2012; Alvarado et al., 2017).

### 13.7 EVALUATION OF PYD PROGRAMMES

The PYD programmes definitely contribute to the optimal development and functioning of the youth. However, they need to be intensive and extensive, keeping in mind the youth requirements and given at appropriate developmental stage. The programmes need to be planned and structured with hands-on and minds-on exercises under direct supervision. Further, the programs need to adopt a ‘person-in-environment’ approach, emphasizing the complex interplay between the two. A systemic view highlighting the different layers of systems in which the youth lives and functions need to be considered. The socio-cultural context also plays an important role in influencing the outcome of the PYD programmes. Further, the programmes need to be based on relevant theoretical frameworks.
Following are some of the aspects of evaluation with regard to the positive youth development programmes:

1. The PYD programmes need to be imbued with a positive perspective rather than just focusing on a disease model to youth development. These need to be based on a holistic view of human development. Both are equally important and complement each other in ensuring well-being of the youth.

2. The positive perspective on PYD highlights the personal qualities (cognitions, affect and behavioural dimensions) and the environmental factors influencing youth development. However, the contribution of biogenetic factors also need to be studied widely (Seligman et al., 2005) so that it leads to a comprehensive understanding on it. Like we have strong research base for the biological causal factors in case of psychopathology, similarly more research needs to be done to explore optimal development and positive character strengths from biological perspective.

3. Role of culture needs to be recognized in influencing the positive experiences and the optimal development of youth. Consideration and integration of socio-cultural aspects into the PYD programmes will make them authentic and sustainable.

4. The programmes on positive youth development need to be evidence-based and compiled to highlight the positive outcomes.

5. Majority of the PYD studies are pre-post based studies. There is need for more longitudinal studies which can point out at the causal relationships between the PYD attributes and well-being.

6. Most of the tools to assess PYD attributes are developed in the western context. It may be noted here that sociocultural contexts influence the developmental assets of youth in different ways (Benson et al., 2006), and also the PYD attributes. This necessitates the use of validated PYD assessment tools to measure the PYD domains (Zhou, Shek, & Zhu, 2020).

7. There is a dearth of Indian research on PYD. A review study by Hameed & Mehrotra (2017) suggests a significant paucity of Indian published literature on PYD programmes and PYD based mental health promotion programmes. Their findings highlighted using the positive youth development as a framework for youth mental health promotion.

8. Youth is not a homogenous group. The diversity owing to age, gender, race, class, economic status, disability etc. makes it challenging for the PYD programmes to cater to the needs of all youth. Further, the schooling system, especially in India, may not provide a uniform experience to the young people and shape their attitudes, beliefs and behaviours accordingly.

Thus overall the positive youth development programmes are crucial factors that can help harness the huge underutilized human resource of the youth for the betterment of the youth themselves, and also for the development and progress
of the country and the world. As Jamieson (2005) suggests, the PYD programmes can be made more effective and fruitful on the basis of the following: (a) the more, the better, (b) the earlier, the better, (c) the more structured, the better.

Self Assessment Questions 2

1. Who has described the 15 key constructs or attributes of positive youth development?

2. Positive youth development programmes are based on which perspective?

3. What are the three components that the PYD programmes need to consider in designing an effective programme?

4. What does SEL programme aim at?

5. Who has given the ecological systems theory?

13.8 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit you learned about positive youth development (PYD). It is a concept that marks a shift from problematic youth to thriving youth who are full of potential. PYD is viewed from the positive psychology perspective and; thus it aims at achieving optimal development and functioning of the youth in a positive family-social-cultural context which enables the youth to engage in positive contribution to the society. Various models of positive youth development are described which highlight the key attributes of PYD. Further positive youth development programmes are explained and specific PYD programmes in Indian and global context are described. Finally, different criteria of evaluation of PYD programmes are described.

13.9 KEY WORDS

Youth: refers to the young people between 15-29 years of age as per the National Youth Policy of India, 2014.

Positive Youth Development: includes a combination of positive experiences, positive relationships and positive environments in the life of the youth.

Resilience: refers to competence to overcome adversity.

Thriving: refers to not only surviving the adversity but also progressing and enhancing oneself.

Developmental Assets: include both internal (individual-related) and external (environmental related) factors that help create positive experiences and well-being for the youth.

Social and Emotional Learning: refers to various intrapersonal and interpersonal competencies related to awareness and management of emotions.
13.10 ANSWERS TO SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Answers to Self Assessment Questions 1

1. 15-29
2. identity versus role confusion
3. positive development
4. The traditional medical model of health focuses more on the absence of psychological distress and disorder rather than on the psychological well-being and positive functioning of individuals.
5. Environment
6. competence, confidence, connection, character, care, and contribution

Answers to Self Assessment Questions 2

2. positive psychology
3. the person, the context/environment related factors, and the interaction between the two
4. SEL programmes aim at promoting the social and emotional competencies of school students and equip them to succeed in school as well as later in life.
5. Bronfenbrenner (1979)

13.11 UNIT END QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the concept of positive youth development.
2. Explain the 5Cs/6Cs model of PYD.
3. What is a PYD programme? Explore and identify certain youth development programmes in your city or State. Can these be called as PYD programmes? If so, why?
4. Identify a positive youth development programme in global context and analyze it in terms of its objective, approach and outcomes.
5. Discuss the criteria of evaluation of PYD programmes.

13.12 REFERENCES

Role of Psychology in Positive Growth Across Life Span


Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India.


Role of Psychology in Positive Growth Across Life Span


13.13 FURTHER LEARNING RESOURCES


https://www.ccrm.in/uploads/1/7/1/9/17199286/positive_youth_development_-_ccrm-2326.pdf


National Programme for Youth and Adolescent Development: Scheme Guidelines. Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.