

NEXT GENERATION INDIA FELLOWS

UNITED NATIONS FOUNDATION

15 CEEW THE COUNCIL

OUR FUTURE INDIA

OCTOBER 2025

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Next Generation India Fellows: Dhruvak Aggarwal, Awais Ahmed, Radhika Bajoria, Ruchira Goyal, Nandini Harihar, Dhairya Nagpal, Prachi Shevgaonkar, Gurjeet Singh, Saikot Sukla and Gunraagh Singh Talwar.

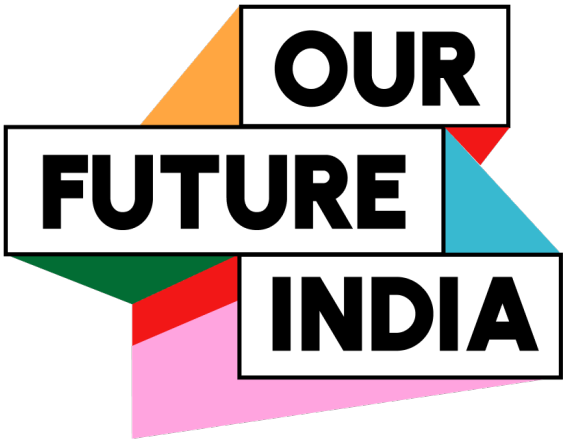
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Disclaimer: This report has been authored by the Next Generation India Fellows and solely reflects their perspectives, analysis, and recommendations drawn from the consultations and research. All content, proposals, and framing are those of the Fellows and are not attributable to either the United Nations Foundation or Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW).


OUR
FUTURE
INDIA

Foreword

We came to the Next Generation India Fellowship from different paths, shaped by reforms, united by movements, and strengthened by institutions. Along the way, we have learned a simple truth: plans endure only when we work with and for young people. As advisors to the Fellows, we share a common understanding: India's path to a resilient and inclusive future, and that of the world, will remain incomplete unless this generation leads the way.

The Fellows imagine an India@100 that is co-designed and co-delivered. In this future, a young climate scientist from Bhubaneswar and a councillor in Indore can prototype an idea on Monday and brief a ministry by Friday. A girl who organised her school becomes a woman who shapes her city. Human capital is not a budget line item but a living promise that skills, dignity, and care will move forward together. We share the Fellows' conviction for an India whose global voice is carried by a generation fluent in both solidarity and solutions. An India able to share what works, adapt what doesn't, and lead with courage.

The *Our Future India* report is a collective act of this imagination and analysis. It turns the big forces of our time into tools. AI becomes a tool for problem-solving. Cities become workshops for dignity and mobility. Climate action becomes a commons where wisdom from communities sits alongside science. Demographics become energy for enterprise. Geopolitics becomes a stage for a more generous kind of leadership from the Global South.

This report offers a roadmap for turning today's disruptions into tomorrow's opportunities. As part of a nationwide campaign, it brought together thousands of young voices across the country and the diaspora through an online survey and on-ground youth consultations. Moreover, the report draws credible conclusions from global experts to blend young voices with established expertise, grounding a united and shared vision for India in 2047.

The recommendations derived from this process blend urgency and patience in a 10-point agenda. Quick wins include policy tweaks, leveraging ongoing efforts and pilot projects. Moonshots carry us to India@2047 with nationwide programs. Future-ready institutions, most notably a proposed Ministry of Future Affairs, catalyze efforts to ensure we think, plan, and act for the future.

This is not only about India, it is also about the example India can set: sharing what works, and listening as much as it leads. A young country, confident in its diversity, that can offer the world a different grammar of cooperation that is practical, hopeful, and grounded in human dignity.

Read this report as an invitation. Challenge it. Improve it. Then back it with action. Measure success by lives made safer, skills made relevant, air made cleaner, trust made stronger—by 2030, and again by 2047.

The next chapter will be written by many hands. Let's make sure those hands include the young fully, fairly, and from the start.

Next Generation India Advisors

Aditi Arora, Country-Director for Girl Up India

Amitabh Kant, Board of Trustees, CEEW, and former G20 Sherpa, India

Ambassador André Aranha Corrêa do Lago, Secretary for Climate, Energy and Environment of the Brazilian Ministry of External Affairs, and President of COP 30

Ambassador Ruchi Ghanashyam, former High Commissioner of India to the UK

Purva Misra, Chief People Officer for the NDTV group

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AI	Artificial Intelligence
AMRUT	Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation
CDRI	Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure
EAC-PM	Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister
GPAI	Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence
GOI	Government of India
IIT	Indian Institute of Technology
ISA	International Solar Alliance
MDB	Multilateral Development Bank
MoEFCC	Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
MoFA	Ministry of Future Affairs
MoSPI	Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation
NEP	National Education Policy
PMO	Prime Minister's Office
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
Y20	Youth20

Our Vision for India 2047

79 years ago, our ancestors dreamed of an India built with conviction and hope.

Today we inherit their dream as the next generation—not to preserve it in amber, but to reimagine it for a new century. It is our turn to dream for a *Viksit Bharat* that will be 100 years old in 2047.

We know the path ahead is not simple. We live in a world that feels less predictable than ever. Floods sweep away villages one year, droughts parch them the next. Jobs vanish as fast as they are created. Cities grow, but so do divides. Algorithms now shape what we see, hear, and even believe. Geopolitical storms ripple through our borders, often without warning.

These disruptions shape our daily lives. But as Next Generation Fellows, we choose to see every global disruption as a doorway. We believe that if we act with courage and foresight, every challenge can spark opportunity, every crisis can give rise to creativity, and every voice can carry solutions.

Our vision is of an India that dares—an India where a girl who once led her school assembly grows up to design her city, where a coder in a village hub powers the world's next innovation, and where caregivers are respected as builders of the nation's future. We see an India that learns from its ancestors and listens to its young, including all generations at the decisionmaking table, from village councils to global forums.

And our vision stretches beyond India's borders. What we do here matters for every country across the world. By sharing our solutions, by working hand-in-hand with our peers within and across borders, we can show the world how youthful nations lead—not by replicating models of the past, but by setting new examples of fairness, solidarity, and bold imagination for all countries to follow.

This is our promise: to be a generation that not only inherits the future but redefines it. Together, we can light the way to an India—and a world—where each generation holds the door open wider for the next generation.

Next Generation India Fellows

Dhruvak Aggarwal, Awais Ahmed, Radhika Bajoria, Ruchira Goyal, Nandini Harihar, Dhairya Nagpal, Prachi Shevgaonkar, Gurjeet Singh, Saikot Sukla and Gunraagh Singh Talwar

Executive Summary

A Generation Standing on the Edge of History

As 10 young Indians part of the Next Generation India Fellowship, we represent the voices, ambitions, and ideas of a generation that makes up the largest share of our country's population. Despite our different backgrounds and expertise, we are united by a simple but powerful purpose: to imagine a future we want to inherit.

Emboldened by this ambition, and with the support of the United Nations Foundation and CEEW, we began a journey of envisioning the future of India at its centenary of independence in 2047.[1] It is a national call to action: to become a fully developed economy, a sustainability leader, and a reformer of global governance in time for our centenary of independence.[2] For those outside India, *Viksit Bharat* is best understood as our North Star—a vision of what a strong, inclusive, future-ready nation should be.

But achieving *Viksit Bharat* is not inevitable. The question is not whether India has a vision—it does. The question is whether this generation can navigate disruption to make that vision real. With 734 million citizens under 30, nearly one in ten young people alive today is Indian.[3] That makes our stake in the outcome impossible to ignore.

This report is our attempt to turn disruption into possibility. It is not written about young people, but by us. It is not a plea for inclusion, but a playbook for transformation intended to fulfill the promise of *Viksit Bharat* by sparking an intergenerational movement where every voice could contribute towards shaping a developed India.



Young leader in Kochi takes the microphone to address his experience on disruptors.

Five Disruptors Defining Our Future

Across months of listening, debating, and imagining with nearly 600 young Indians, five forces emerged as the great disruptors of our time. Each is a threat—but each, if grasped with courage, could be a lever for renewal and the realization of *Viksit Bharat*:



Demographic Trends

The Double-Edged Dividend

India's youth bulge is historic. Yet, for many, it feels less like a dividend and more like pressure. Every year, millions enter the workforce with degrees in hand but uncertainty in their hearts.

Take Binati, who we met from a tribal community in Odisha. At just 19, she contested panchayat elections. Though she did not win, her campaign lit a spark, showing other young women that political participation was not a privilege, but a right. Her courage speaks to the possibilities of this demographic moment: if youth are trusted with responsibility, we can reshape governance from the ground up.

The government's call for *Viksit Bharat* depends on precisely this kind of participation. Without jobs, voice, and dignity for youth, the demographic dividend becomes a demographic burden. And time is short: by 2050, India's population will begin to age.4 What we do now will decide if *Viksit Bharat* is a shared reality or an unfulfilled promise.



Rapid Urbanization

Building Next-Generation Cities

By 2036, India will add more than 600 million new urban dwellers.[5] Cities are already where 60% of GDP,[6] is produced and where young people chase opportunity, identity, and independence.

Yet, the lived experience is more complicated. Mubeena, a young professional who migrated from her village to Kochi, told us that staying away from family was the hardest thing she had to overcome, but she made the move to the city for work. Her story mirrors millions who migrate out of necessity, not choice, only to face soaring rents, fragile infrastructure, and unsafe streets.

Urbanization is the test of whether *Viksit Bharat* will be inclusive. Will it create megacities of inequality, or participatory 15-minute cities that work for everyone? Will migration constrain opportunities, or will Smart Village Hubs make India's rural life more inviting?

Artificial Intelligence

Innovation and Skilling

We are the first generation to come of age alongside technology that can make up their own stories, draw their own pictures, and even write their own songs. For some, AI can uplift and educate; for others, it is a looming threat to jobs and truth itself.

Ashim, a student we met in Silchar, dreams of solving his city's traffic chaos using open-source datasets. He is proof that given access to equitable AI, young people in rural towns can innovate solutions that matter.

For *Viksit Bharat* to mean more than growth on paper, India must ensure that AI is in itself democratizing. That will require skilling, governance, and ethics to govern our path.

Climate Change

Moving From Anxiety to Action

For our generation, climate change is not tomorrow's story—it is today's reality. Every consultation we held surfaced as a defining anxiety.

Consider Ravi, a student we met in Silchar, who nearly missed his exams when annual floods repeatedly delayed trains. Or Shraddha, who sees green jobs as a chance to earn while saving the planet. Their testimonies depict the dual nature of climate disruption: it is devastating, but it can also birth entirely new livelihoods.

India has placed climate action at the core of its *Viksit Bharat* vision. From leading the International Solar Alliance (ISA),[7] to scaling Mission LiFE.[8] But unless young people are empowered as co-creators of this transition—as innovators, farmers, entrepreneurs, and ambassadors—*Viksit Bharat* will fall short of its own promise.

Geopolitical Shifts

Reimagining the future of global cooperation

The world our generation inherits is fractured. Multilateral institutions still reflect 1945, not 2045. Supply chains wobble under political strain. Conflicts erupt, pulling futures into uncertainty.

Yet, young Indians are refusing to be bystanders. Harsh, a 24-year-old we met from Jammu and Kashmir, founded a youth-led think tank on foreign policy, making space for our voices in debates usually dominated by grey suits. And Nomzamo, a Zimbabwean student studying aerospace engineering in India, reminded us: "Countries like India are trying to cooperate a lot with young countries like mine, and our demographic strength is reflected in this knowledge-sharing process."

For *Viksit Bharat* to make a difference globally, India must also lead a new grammar of cooperation that centers young countries, and ensures youth have a seat on the global table.

From Vision to Action: Quick Wins and Moonshots

If *Viksit Bharat* is to be realized, vision must translate into action now, especially where young Indians live, learn, and lead. The pathways we propose are concrete steps—some **quick wins** that can be embedded into existing architecture building on current policies, others bold **moonshots** that demand new institutions and imagination that will require time but are essential for *Viksit Bharat* to endure. Together, they form an intergenerational playbook for India's journey to its centenary.

At the heart of these proposals is a series of cross-cutting foresight innovations for a Future India centered with a **Ministry of Future Affairs (MoFA)**. This new institution would anchor futures thinking across government, ensuring every budget, law, and program is tested for its impact on coming generations. MoFA would act as a bridge between quick wins and moonshots, making *Viksit Bharat* aspirational as well as achievable.



Young leaders in Bhubaneswar come together to ideate Our Future India.

The Our Future India
Blueprint

Demographic Trends
To safeguard people in the midst of demographic transitions

Quick Win: Establish a National Gig Work Commission to formalize protections for 400 million informal and platform workers, building on Rajasthan's pioneering law.

Moonshot: A Care Fund that pays caregivers, recognizing care as real work and embedding gender equity into the foundations of our economy.

Rapid Urbanization
To power sustainable, and resilient people-centered cities

Quick Win: Launch Smart Village Hubs in high-migration regions to provide digital infrastructure, skills, and incubation so that migration becomes a choice, not a necessity.

Moonshot: Scale a Jan Bhagidari (People's Participation) Framework, embedding participatory budgeting and Urban Futures Labs in every major city so citizens co-create budgets and plans.

Artificial Intelligence
Establishing guidelines for inclusive and ethical use of AI for social good and growth

Quick Win: Create a Panel on AI & Emerging Tech with youth representation, acting as a rapid-response ethics body.

Moonshot: Adopt a Skills-First Education Model that shifts hiring from degrees to demonstrated skills, preparing India's youth for jobs that do not even exist yet.

Climate Change
To turbocharge on climate change, moving from climate anxiety to climate action

Quick Win: Establish a Bharat Climate Knowledge Compendium, digitizing indigenous practices like water harvesting and cyclone-resistant architecture.

Moonshot: Build an India Supergrid, connecting renewable hotspots with communities nationwide—a decentralized, resilient, and green energy democracy.

Geopolitical Shifts
To centre young people at the heart of global decision making

Quick Win: Launch a Global South Young Leaders Fellowship, deepening South–South ties through exchanges in innovation, diplomacy, and entrepreneurship.

Moonshot: Institutionalize a Young India Secretariat, embedding youth delegates in every major international forum—from the UN to the G20—so Indian diplomacy permanently reflects the voices of future generations.

A Day in 2047

Imagining *Viksit Bharat*

To understand what these changes mean, imagine a day in 2047.

It begins in a village in Jharkhand, where a teenage girl logs on at her local Smart Hub. Her project on solar-powered cold storage is mentored by an engineer in Bengaluru and funded by microcredit she accessed online. She does not need to leave her community to chase opportunity; opportunity has come to her.

In Bengaluru, her cousin joins his neighborhood's annual City Sabha. Citizens vote on budget allocations—from flood-resilient infrastructure to youth sports facilities—and see the results implemented within months. For him, democracy is not something distant, but lived every day.

In Delhi, a group of gig workers meet with their representatives on the National Gig Work Commission. Their contracts guarantee sick leave, maternity benefits, and stable wages. They no longer fear the precarity of work, but see dignity in it.

On India's coasts, renewable energy flows seamlessly through the India Supergrid. A sarpanch in Ladakh sends surplus solar power south; a young entrepreneur in Coimbatore trades neighborhood wind credits on an app. Electricity is not just a utility but a shared asset.

And at the United Nations, Maya, a youth delegate from Tawang, addresses the General Assembly. She speaks not only as a representative of India but as a guardian of future generations. Behind her sit peers from Africa and Latin America—alumni of the Global South Fellowship—shaping negotiations through trust built years ago.

This is *Viksit Bharat*: not only a developed economy, but a society where every generation builds on the last, leaving more possibilities than it inherited. Global history teaches us that demographic windows close quickly.[9] If India misses this moment, the cost will be borne for generations. If we seize it, however, India can show the world how the largest democracy and the youngest population can reimagine governance, sustainability, and solidarity for the 21st century.



Young people spending a relaxing afternoon at Cubbon Park in Bengaluru



Youth Consultation at Assam University convening over 90 young students, policymakers, social workers and changemakers

A Call to Action

This is our promise as Fellows: to be a generation that not only inherits the future but redefines it. But we cannot do it alone.

We call on policymakers to institutionalize foresight through a Ministry of Future Affairs. We call on businesses to invest in skills and care as seriously as they do in profits. We call on civil society to amplify young voices, not tokenize them. And we call on our peers—India's 734 million young people—to see themselves as protagonists of *Viksit Bharat*.

This is the premise of *Our Future India*.

It is a manifesto of possibility; it is a blueprint for action; and primarily, it is an invitation to every generation to co-create the future with us.

The choice is ours. The time is now.


Our Future India
Field Trip, 20th September, 2047
MINISTRY OF FUTURE AFFAIRS & FUTURES MUSEUM
Class, this is where the future of India is imagined!
It feels like stepping into tomorrow!
Woah!
A robot!
Hello, young explorers! I am Disha, your guide to the future.


Can I ask you absolutely anything?
Yes, you can ask me anything! The future is full of questions, much like you.
ASK ME
FUTURES MUSEUM
Can we go there?

Our Process

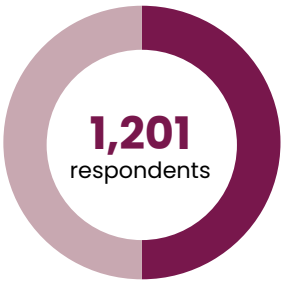
Rooted in Reality

Our Future India draws on a combination of quantitative and qualitative evidence, shaped through extensive engagement with young people and an intergenerational group of experts across India and its diaspora. We chose this approach to ensure that the analysis is anchored in present realities while anticipating future shifts. This is critical to bridge short-term policy priorities with India's long-term vision.

The locations for our research were selected based on relevance to the disruptors, accessibility, and geographic and socioeconomic diversity. Direct efforts were made through grassroots youth organizations to invite young people from marginalized communities. Experts were selected with an emphasis on intergenerational collaboration and multisectoral insights.

Combined with literature reviews, this provided a rigorous body of evidence on which to build our recommendations.

Our Process



An intergenerational survey captured a gender-balanced cohort of **51%** female and **49%** male respondents.



600

Young leaders attended **in-person youth consultations** in 7 cities–plus 4 across the globe for the Indian diaspora.



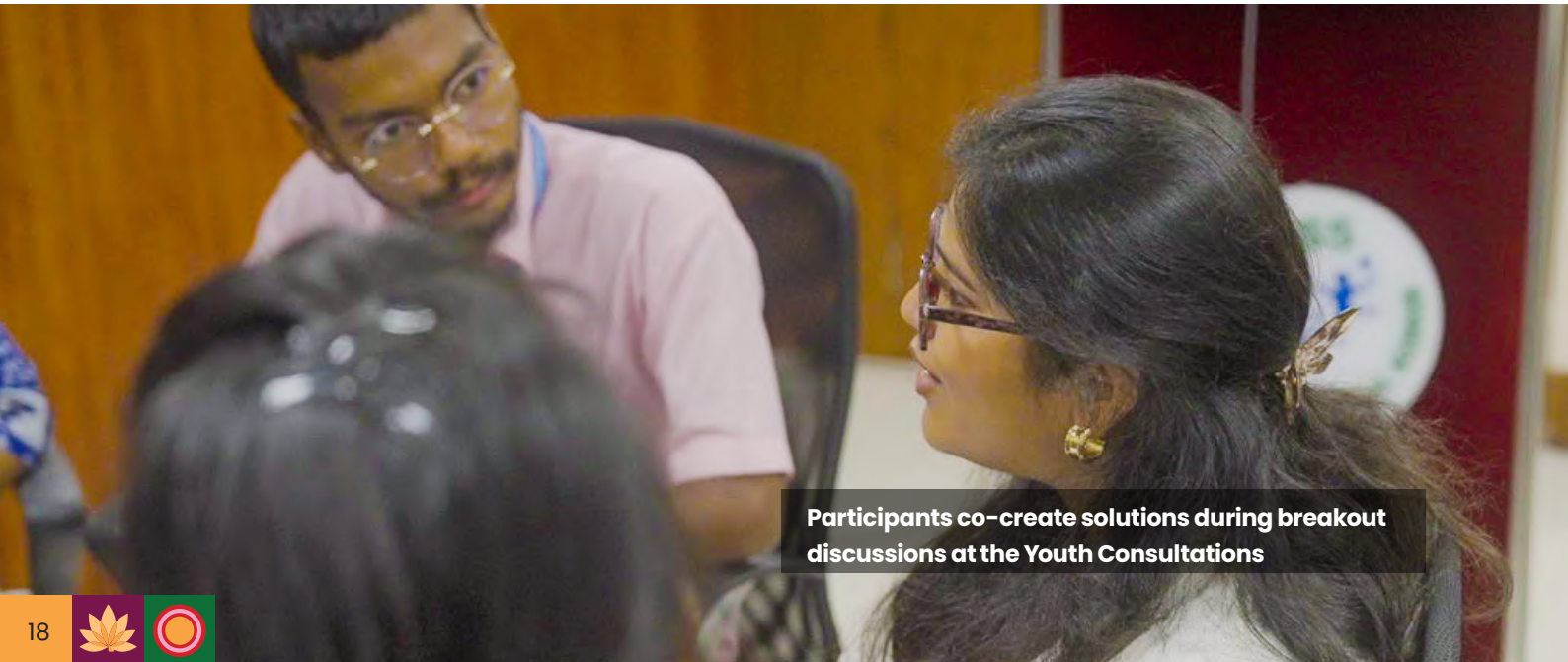
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Expert interviews with academics, industry leaders and ambassadors helped shape the report.



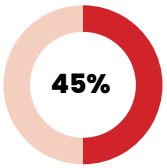
300+

Sources were reviewed, including policy reports, peer-reviewed articles, government data and media coverage.

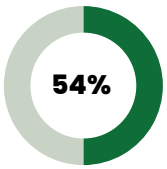


Participants co-create solutions during breakout discussions at the Youth Consultations

Demographic Trends



Believe that domestic work is equally valuable to paid work.



Support compensation for domestic labour.

> "Whether at the municipal, state, or panchayat level, any decision affecting young people should actively include their representatives in the process."

Rohit Kumar, Co-founder at Young Leaders for Active Citizenship

> "My brother is a gig worker in a city, and he strongly believes in being his own boss. I find this perspective resonates strongly within my generation too."

Chayanika, Masters aspirant in Silchar

India needs to value young people by giving them a seat at the table (through a **Young India Advisory Council**), securing their livelihood (with a **Gig Work Commission** that defines new and emerging forms of work) and by ensuring wellness for young women in particular (via a central **Care Fund** compensating domestic labor through satellite accounts).

Rapid Urbanization



More than 1 in 4 young respondents aged 30 and under (27.63%) say housing is not affordable.



More than 1 in 3 (36%) were concerned about traffic congestion and public transport affecting quality of life in 2047.



Nearly 1 in 2 (46%) point to job opportunities and economic stability as concerns for 2047.

> "Cities need to mainstream equity and do it early on, with the support of their community, especially young people, before it's too late."

Vidhya Mohankumar, Urban Design Collective

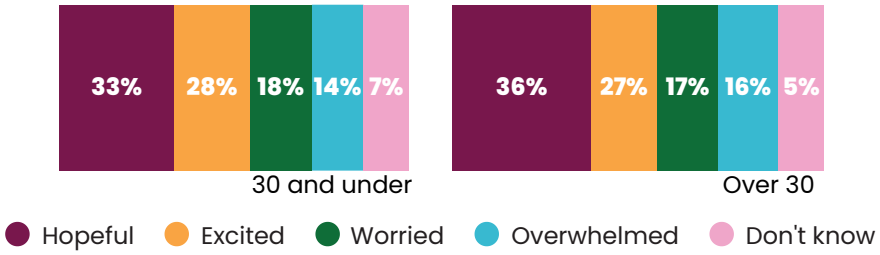
> "It is not in my interest to reside in a mega-city because of traffic, cost of living, struggling to find a community etc. But the facilities and opportunities in a mega-city are not available in my hometown."

Ashfaq, 22-year-old who migrated to Bengaluru for work

By building India's villages with opportunities (**with Smart Village Hubs** that promote rural entrepreneurship) and its cities with participation (through a **Jan Bhagidari**, 'peoples' participation,' model) young Indians will be able to shape the future irrespective of geography.

Artificial Intelligence

Hopefulness and excitement are dominant emotions about AI.



"AI's sowing doubt on what is real. When you can't discern real from fake, it's a really scary place."

Sandra Khalil, Associate Director, All Tech is Human

"Our degrees at home trained us to memorise, not to think. Abroad, professors and employers alike test critical thinking, technical competency and problem-solving, and we are a step behind."

Srijani, 22-year-old Indian scholar studying in the UK

India can utilise AI for public good by building the next generation of AI-learners (in a **Skills-First Education** model with worker vouchers and credit-based courses) and simultaneously navigate its risks (by way of a **Panel on AI and Emerging Tech** that establishes guardrails through a rapid-response ethics board).

Climate Change



70.7% of young people (30 and under) report feeling anxious about climate change



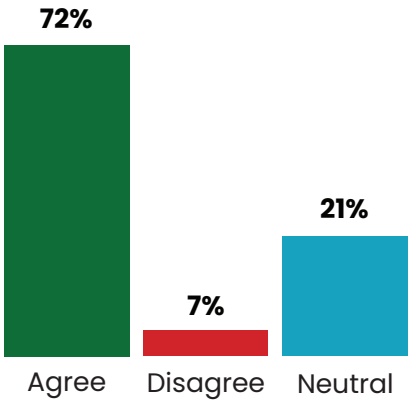
Yet only **27.5%** of them feel represented in decision-making at the national level

"The deployment of URE tends to occur in areas that are already behind in development. Without proper safeguards for communities, there is a risk of inequitable flow of benefits."

Akanksha Tyagi, Programme Lead, CEEW

India can build a climate-resilient future with its largest demographic (through instituting **Mission LiFE youth ambassadors**), bridging the past and the present (with a **Bharat Knowledge Compendium** documenting indigenous knowledge), and supporting mini or micro-grids (as an **India Supergrid**).

Geopolitical Shifts



72% believe that Global South countries like India and Brazil will **gain more influence** in shaping global decisions in the next ten years, compared to **7% who disagree**.

This sentiment is echoed by all age groups.

"This generation wants purpose, dignity, and agency. When governance misses that, they miss the moment. What we need is not just youth-focused policy, but youth-informed governance."

Anshul Tewari, Founder, Youth Ki Awaaz

India is positioned to be the voice of the Global South. These efforts can be furthered through building the next generation of leaders (with a **Young India Secretariat**, embedding them in multilateral delegations) and connecting them with other young countries (through a **Global South Fellowship**, exchanging talent and ideas to co-create solutions).



Participants co-create solutions during breakout discussions at the Youth Consultations

The Five Global Disruptors

Shaping India's Future and the World

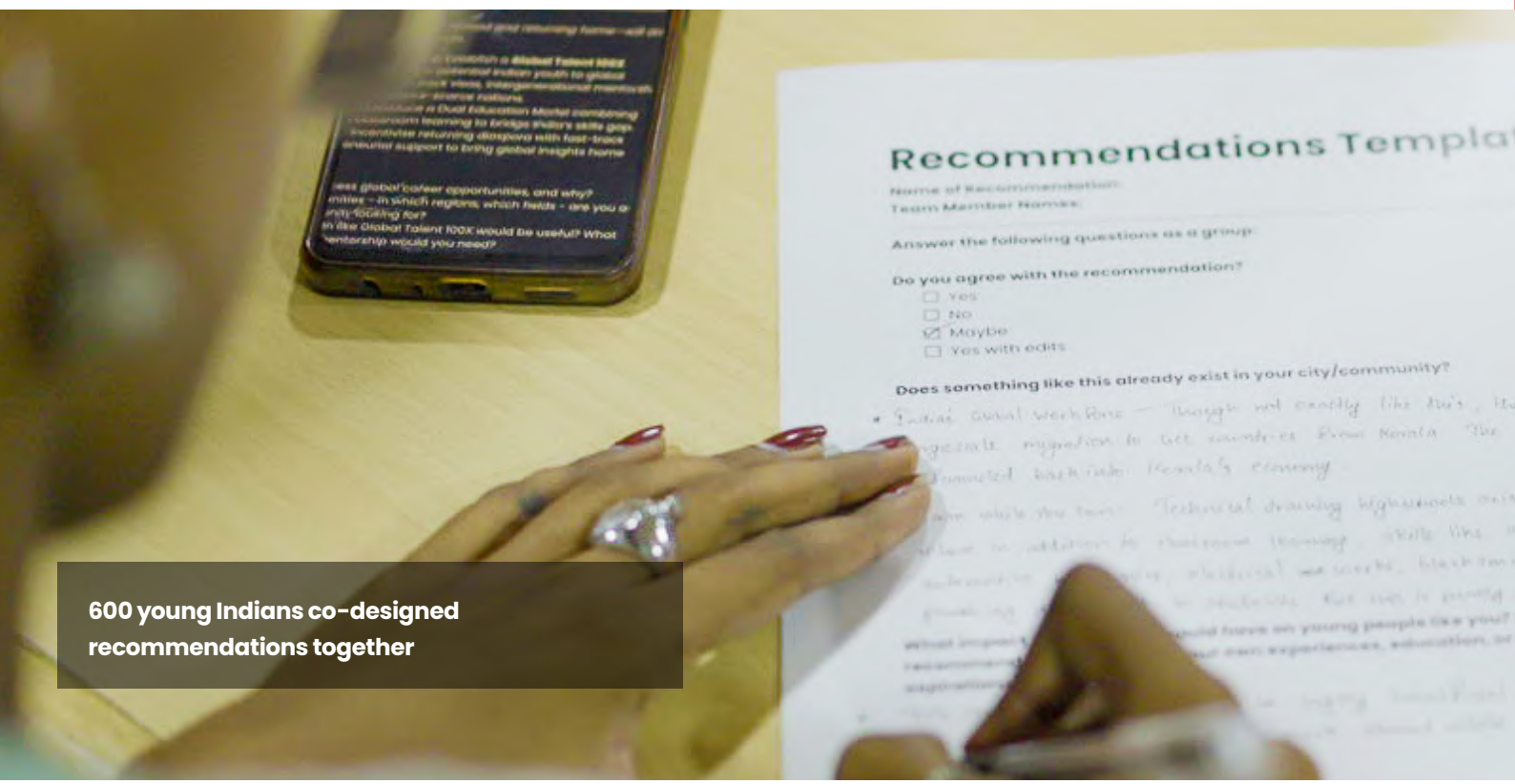
We, the Next Generation India Fellows, are coming of age in an unprecedented moment.

More than 80 countries that gained independence in the aftermath of World War II will celebrate their centenaries in the coming decades.[10] India is among the first.[11] Many of these are young countries across the Global South where 50-80% of the population is under 30.[12] Together, these young countries represent nearly nine out of ten people on the planet,[13] and hold the majority of the world's natural resources.[14] Young people and young countries are architects of the 21st century. And we are doing so amidst profound disruption.

Five global forces—artificial intelligence, climate change, rapid urbanization, demographic shifts, and geopolitical change—are radically transforming how countries like ours think and act for the future.

"Sometimes it feels like everything's out of our hands, like AI, climate, jobs. But futures thinking makes me feel like we can have a say in what comes next."

Trisha, a young Indian professional working in the UK



600 young Indians co-designed recommendations together

Rising seas and heatwaves threaten livelihoods, while automation changes how we work and learn. Some nations struggle with aging while others grapple with massive youth bulges. Cities swell as millions migrate for opportunity, even as global power balances shift.

These disruptions bring risks—but with foresight and innovation, they can also become levers to leapfrog traditional development pathways, allowing India to disrupt the 21st century for the better.[15] For us, as Fellows, these are not abstract trends. They are the daily realities shaping our futures, and they could also be the drivers of bold new opportunities.



Demographic Trends

More than 734 million Indians are under 30—that's nearly one in ten young people on the planet.[16]

India faces one of the highest youth unemployment rates in the world,[17] with young women disproportionately affected.[18]



Rapid Urbanization

Globally, 7 in 10 people will live in cities by 2050,[19] with India contributing the largest share of this urban surge.

India's rural population is projected to dip below 50% by 2050.[20]



Artificial Intelligence

India's AI market is growing at 25–35% annually, one of the fastest growth rates globally.[21]

AI could automate up to half of all entry-level jobs in India,[22] even as nearly 8 million jobs must be created annually to cater to its young workforce.[23]



Climate Change

Climate change could cost India 3–10% of GDP annually by 2100, depending on the severity of warming.[24]

India already generates 50% of its installed electricity capacity from non-fossil fuel sources, five years ahead of its Paris target.[25]



Geopolitical Shifts

By 2100, 80% of the world's youth will live in Asia or Africa, making Global South voices critical to future governance.[26]

During its G20 presidency, India secured the African Union as a permanent G20 member, a major win for young countries seeking inclusion.[27]

India stands at a defining crossroads. Our government has declared bold ambitions under the *Viksit Bharat* agenda: to become a developed economy, a global sustainability leader, and a leader of multilateral governance by 2047. But to actualize this vision in the face of disruption, India must harness its most powerful asset: us, its young people. With 734 million citizens under the age of 30, nearly one in ten young people in the world is Indian.

Our purpose in Our Future India is to present a youth-informed roadmap that could power India's transformation by its centenary. We are clear that India's path to 2047 cannot be imagined without young people leading it. Our recommendations are not demands but proposals—ideas that could take root in existing systems or inspire entirely new ones.

We know the risks if we fail. When we look to 2047, we see two possible versions of India.

In one, the disruptors converge into a perfect storm. Cities crumble under unplanned growth.[28] AI displaces more jobs than it creates.[29] Climate change forces migration and hunger.[30] Multilateralism remains broken.[31] Young Indians—the very asset meant to propel us forward—feel sidelined. *Viksit Bharat* becomes a deferred dream.

In the other, disruption becomes a springboard. Villages thrive as Smart Hubs where entrepreneurship is ingrained in local culture. Cities are inclusive, green, and participatory. AI becomes as empowering as electricity—invisible but everywhere. Climate action necessitates a wave of innovation and ingenuity, creating 54 million green jobs.[32] India leads a Global South that speaks, becoming architects of a new global grammar. In this world, *Viksit Bharat* is fulfilled—not only as a government plan, but as a people's project, shaped and led by young people. Our generation could be the one that reimagines governance; moving from reacting to crises to anticipating them.

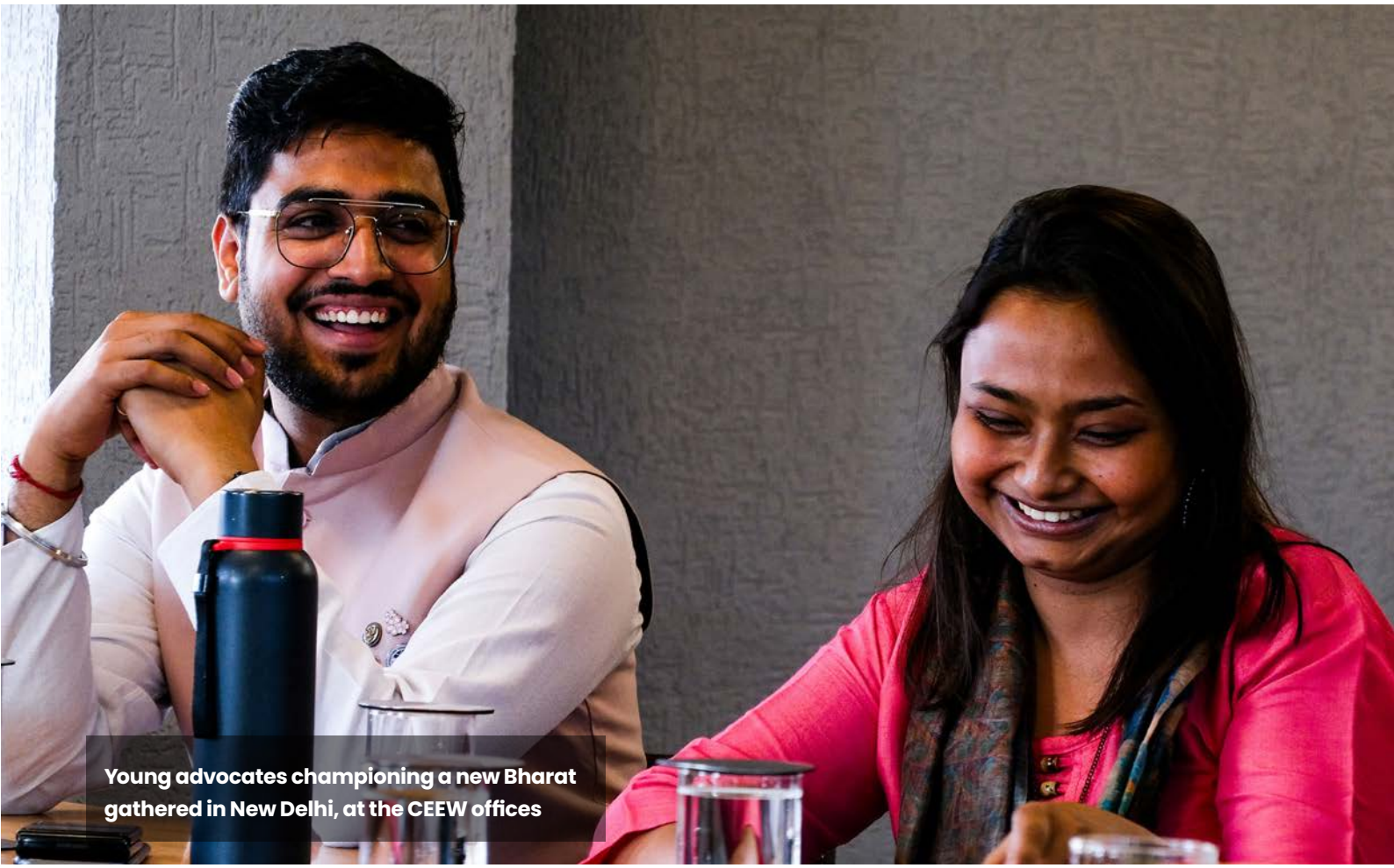
This is why we believe India could shift from reactive policymaking to anticipatory governance—embedding foresight into every institution. Choices made in the next few years will define our route to 2047 and beyond. Will India merely react to shifting trends, or will it seize the moment to lead the way in employing AI, battling climate change, steering urbanization, leveraging its demographic strength, and championing a new era of multilateral cooperation? The answer lies in what we do next.

> *"We need an institution in India that asserts intergenerational belonging and futures thinking."*
>
> **Nishant Singh, Head of Research at Youth Ki Awaaz**

Turning vision into reality requires moving from diagnosis to action. The following pathways reframe and expand the recommendations of the *Our Future India* as an intergenerational playbook to achieve the status of a *Viksit Bharat* by 2047, with a blueprint centered on becoming a developed nation marked by economic success, scientific and technological prosperity, and social equity.

Each pathway addresses one of the five major disruptors. Tying them together is a cross-cutting institutional innovation: a proposed Ministry of Future Affairs to champion long-term thinking and intergenerational equity. These pathways are designed as concrete actions for policymakers, and communities to collaboratively secure India's future. Quick wins tackle urgent needs with pilot programs and policy tweaks, while moonshot missions aim for transformational change by 2047. Throughout, we envision young people as active partners and leaders in bringing about these solutions. Each strategy listed is grounded in ongoing efforts or proven models, to ensure that India hits the ground running.

Above all, this playbook emphasizes that siloed interventions are not enough–coordination, intergenerational participation, and futures-thinking must underpin the nation's approach to every challenge. Through these pathways, India can translate its demographic dividend, technological prowess, cultural wisdom, and global goodwill into concrete benefits for all citizens, present and future.



Young advocates championing a new Bharat gathered in New Delhi, at the CEEW offices

Demographic Trends

The Double-Edged Dividend

India's demographic reality is a promise as well as a warning. With more than half of the population under 30,[33] we are at the precipice of a historic opportunity: a vast, energetic workforce that could drive growth, and global influence. But this promise is fragile. Today's young Indians face a paradox: they are entering the workforce in greater numbers, but often without adequate jobs or social support. India currently faces one of the highest rates of youth unemployment,[34] particularly among young women.[35] At the same time, India's population is aging quickly, adding new care responsibilities that disproportionately fall, unpaid and unrecognized, on women and girls.[36]

> *"Invest in our young people. Each one is important. Each one is an asset."*
>
> **Sandhya Gupta, founder at Aavishkaar**

For young Indians, this paradox is personal. Many of us are trying to find decent work and independence, while also carrying the weight of caring for our younger siblings and aging parents. If left unaddressed, such an imbalance risks turning our youth bulge into a liability rather than a dividend. To unlock the demographic dividend, India must do two things at once: create meaningful jobs for the millions of young people entering the workforce every year, and build a care system that shares responsibilities equally, without overburdening women.

We believe India's youthful energy can become a transformative force for prosperity and social harmony if we tackle employment and care collectively. By investing in education-to-employment pipelines, supporting entrepreneurship, expanding green and digital jobs, and valuing the care economy as real work, we can enable young Indians to be innovators and caregivers without sacrificing their potential. Harnessing this moment means treating young people not as a challenge to be managed, but as equal stakeholders building a more prosperous, and future-ready India.

Demographic Trends

To safeguard people in the midst of demographic transitions

Quick Win: Establish a National Gig Work Commission to formalize protections for 400 million informal and platform workers, building on Rajasthan's pioneering law.

Moonshot: A Care Fund that pays caregivers—recognizing care as real work and embedding gender equity into the foundations of our economy.

Quick Win

National Gig Work Commission–Securing the New Workforce

Objective: Transform India's booming gig and informal work sector into a sustainable engine of employment with proper protections for workers.

India's young workforce is increasingly engaged in non-traditional work–freelancing, gig jobs, platform-based services–that fall outside legacy labor laws.[37] Acknowledging this shift, the government has begun extending social security for gig workers. The Code on Social Security (2020) legally defined gig and platform workers and laid a foundation for welfare measures.[38]

In 2025, the Union Budget expanded health coverage to gig workers via the e-Shram portal, a national database of unorganized workers.[39] Some states, like Rajasthan, Karnataka, and Telangana,[40] have gone further–pioneering laws such as the Rajasthan Platform-Based Gig Workers Act (2023) which guarantees social security and grievance redressal for gig workers.[41]

These are promising first steps, but India needs a dedicated institutional mechanism to continuously adapt policies to the ever evolving world of work.

> *"They might be called informal workers, but the country doesn't function without them."*
>
> **Sunil Kumar, Insurgent Academic at LSE**



Mural in Varanasi celebrates Yuva Bharat, the nation's greatest strength

Action Plan

We recommend establishing a **Gig Work Commission** at the national level as a standing body that brings together government, industry, worker representatives, and sectoral experts. The Commission's mandate could include:

Workforce Mapping and Classification

Undertaking regular surveys across sectors and states to map the diverse range of work, income patterns, and job conditions in the gig economy. Using this evidence, the Commission could recommend nuanced reforms to legal definitions–for example, differentiating a part-time rideshare driver from a full-time app-based freelancer–so that regulations are updated to keep pace. Continuous refinement of definitions like 'gig worker' and 'platform worker' will ensure more workers are covered by protections as new forms of work emerge.

Multi-Stakeholder Policy Co-creation

Serving as a collaborative forum for discussion among relevant stakeholders–ministries (Labour, Skill Development, IT), state governments, labor unions, gig economy companies, and gig workers themselves. The Commission can convene roundtables to co-develop guidelines on matters such as algorithmic transparency for ride-hailing apps or insurance schemes for delivery workers. It could also include migration experts to address overlaps between gig work and migrant labor, ensuring migrant gig workers are not left out of benefits.[42]

Policy Pilot and Scale

Acting as a rapid response unit to emerging issues faced by gig workers. For example, if a new AI-powered platform starts employing thousands of young people, the Commission could quickly study its labor implications and recommend interim measures or pilots (such as portable benefits accounts) while permanent policies are developed. It can facilitate pilot programs in progressive states (as Rajasthan did) and create templates for nationwide adoption. As the definitions of gig work evolve, the Commission would continuously update standards and best practices.

What it Takes

The Gig Work Commission would require high-level coordination. It could be anchored by the Ministry of Labour and Employment in partnership with the Ministry of Electronics and IT, considering the digital nature of many platforms. Close engagement with state governments would be essential since labor is a concurrent subject–states like Rajasthan and Karnataka can be incubators for innovation. The Commission could also collaborate with academic institutions and think tanks for data analysis, and with international organizations for aligning with global standards. Funding could come from a mix of government budget and contributions from industry to finance worker surveys and welfare programs. Crucially, gig workers themselves need representation–e.g. seats on the Commission or a formal consultation group–to ensure policies reflect on-the-ground realities. By institutionalizing this collaborative framework, we can create a responsive regulatory ecosystem that keeps pace with the future of work.

Moonshot

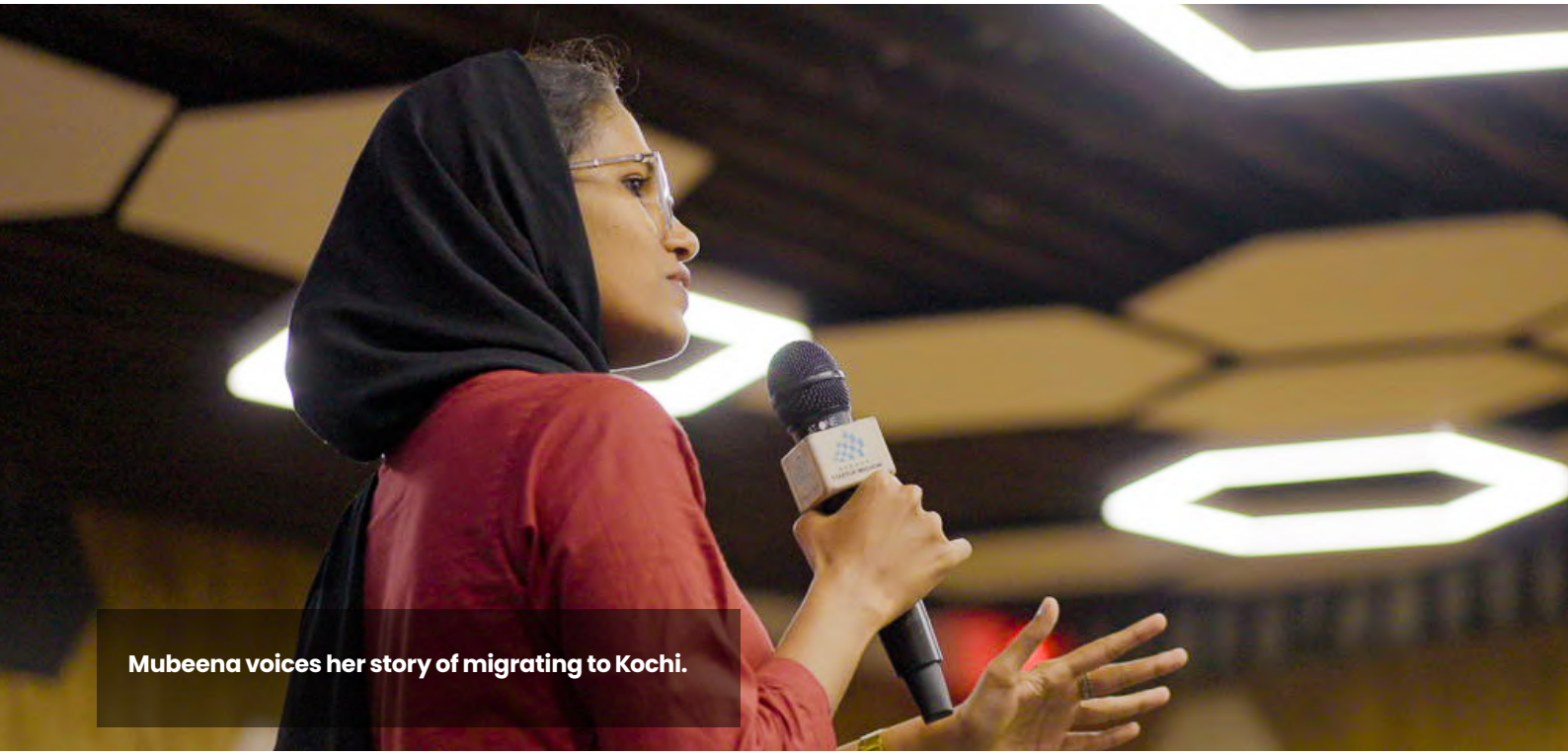
Care Economy Reforms–Recognizing and Rewarding Care Work

Objective: Build an infrastructure of support by way of compensation for care work–especially the unpaid and underpaid care provided by women–to address India's aging population and free up young caregivers, allowing them to participate fully in India's economy.

As India's population ages with 347 million people over 60 projected by 2050, the burden of care is increasing exponentially.[43] Indian women already perform three times more unpaid care work than men[44] limiting their work opportunities.[45] If unaddressed, this imbalance will entrench gender inequality while dragging down economic productivity and straining young caregivers–the backbone of India's demographic dividend.

There is increasing recognition of this issue: the Indian government's recent Time-Use Surveys have quantified women's unpaid work,[46] and national consultations on the care economy have recommended strengthening care infrastructure.[47] The government's *Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)* gives cash incentives for maternal health to pregnant and lactating mothers.[48] Some states have begun innovative schemes such as Kerala's *Aswasakiranam* initiative provides stipends to caregivers;[49] Goa's *Griha Aadhar,*[50] and Assam's *Orunodoi scheme,*[51] offer cash transfers to housewives. Furthermore, India's leadership at the G20 secured a commitment to address unequal care burdens.[52] Building on these efforts, India can blaze a trail by formally valuing care work, incorporating it into its society and the economy.

> *"Our society needs a behavioral overhaul. The lack of recognition for care work is visible in the way we treat those who lead this labour: our women."*
>
> **Khanak, Ahmedabad-based student**



Mubeena voices her story of migrating to Kochi.

Action Plan

Building on previous initiatives, we propose launching a comprehensive **Care Fund and Framework** that encompasses public awareness, education, and direct financial support for caregivers:

Care Literacy and Education

Integrate care awareness into school and college curricula to reform societal attitudes from the ground up. Similar to how financial literacy is taught to encourage saving, care literacy modules could teach students about the value of caregiving, and shared household responsibilities. This will help normalize all genders taking on care duties. In parallel, mass media campaigns (with influencers, film individuals, and civil society) can celebrate caregivers and model equitable care divisions at home. Over time, these efforts could trigger a generational mindset shift where care work is respected and shared by all genders.

A National Care Fund

Establish a nationally financed Care Fund to provide remuneration for informal caregivers, especially targeting low-income households. The fund's design could be informed by local models. It would effectively pay qualifying individuals for caregiving tasks–for example, a stipend for those taking care of elderly family members or persons with disabilities at home. To manage feasibility, this can start as a targeted program: women below a particular income threshold or those who had to leave formal employment for caregiving could receive a monthly payment from the Fund when caring for a dependent. The amount could be calibrated based on the calculated economic value of care work, with studies estimating women's unpaid work at 15–17% of India's GDP.[53] Over time, as fiscal space allows, the coverage can expand. The Fund would not only supplement family incomes (preventing caregivers from slipping into poverty) but it would be a powerful signal that care work is work. In parallel, the government should strengthen public services–daycare centers, community creches, elder care facilities–so that caregiving responsibility is not borne by families alone.

Policy and Legal Framework

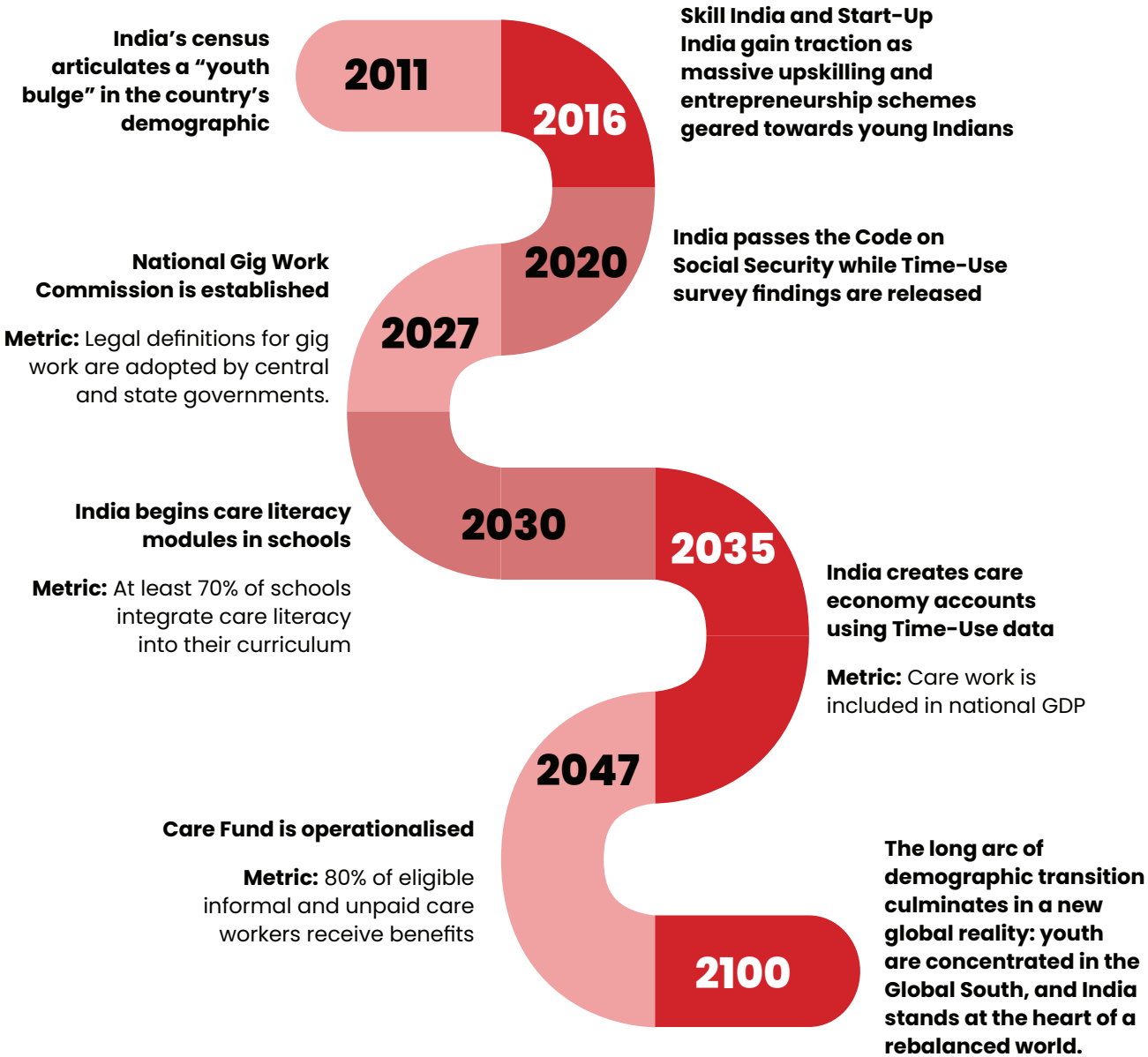
To sustain these measures, institutional changes are needed. Adopting the 5R Framework from UN Women–Recognise, Reduce, Redistribute, Represent, Reward–can guide a holistic national care strategy.[54] For example:

- Recognise care by measuring it via Time-Use Surveys and new 'Care Accounts' in GDP
- Reduce care burdens through better public services (water, electricity, and more);
- Redistribute household work between genders by incentivizing paternity leave and flexible work arrangements;
- Represent caregivers in policymaking (perhaps a national commission on care economy)
- Reward care via the Care Fund and tax credits.

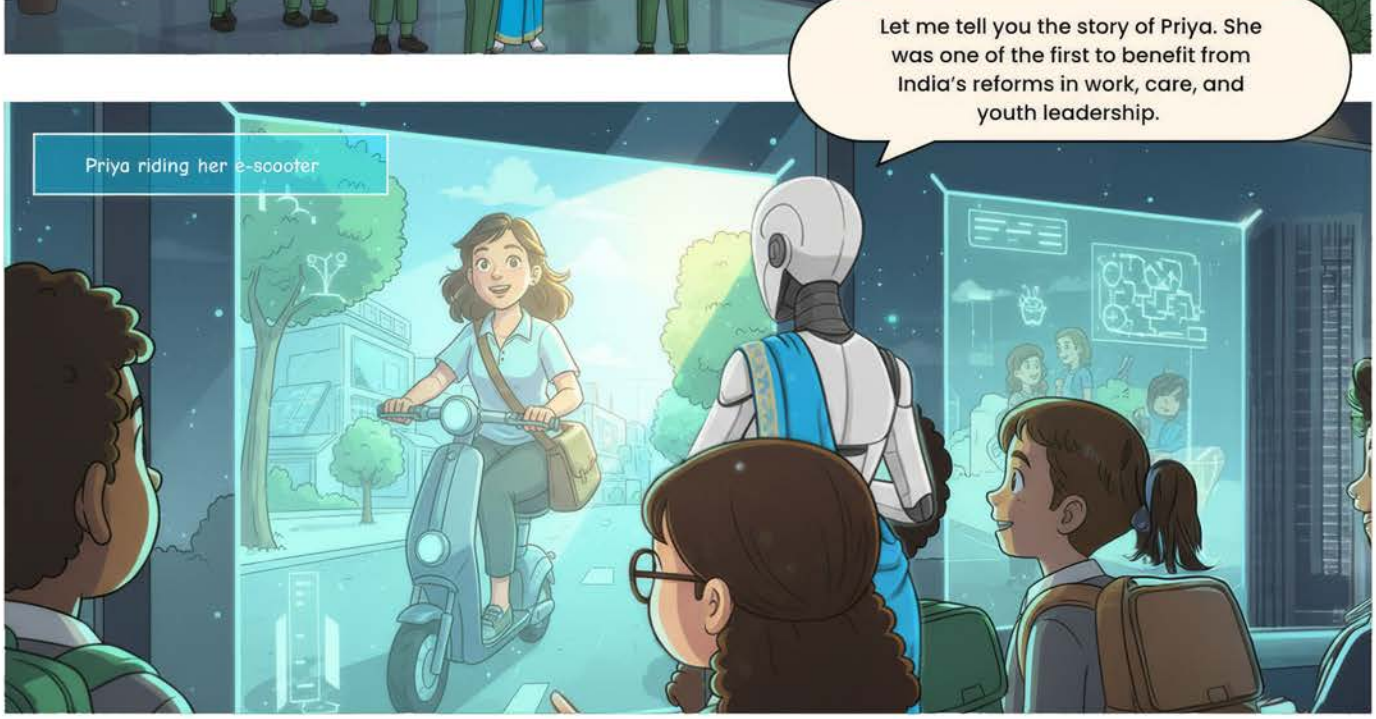
The creation of Satellite Accounts for the Care Economy could formally track and value unpaid care work, much as Mexico does annually.[55] Eventually, enacting a Care Act or incorporating care responsibilities into labor laws could entrench these provisions legally–for instance, mandating workplaces above a certain size to provide childcare infrastructure, or giving legal status to domestic workers with benefits.

What it Takes

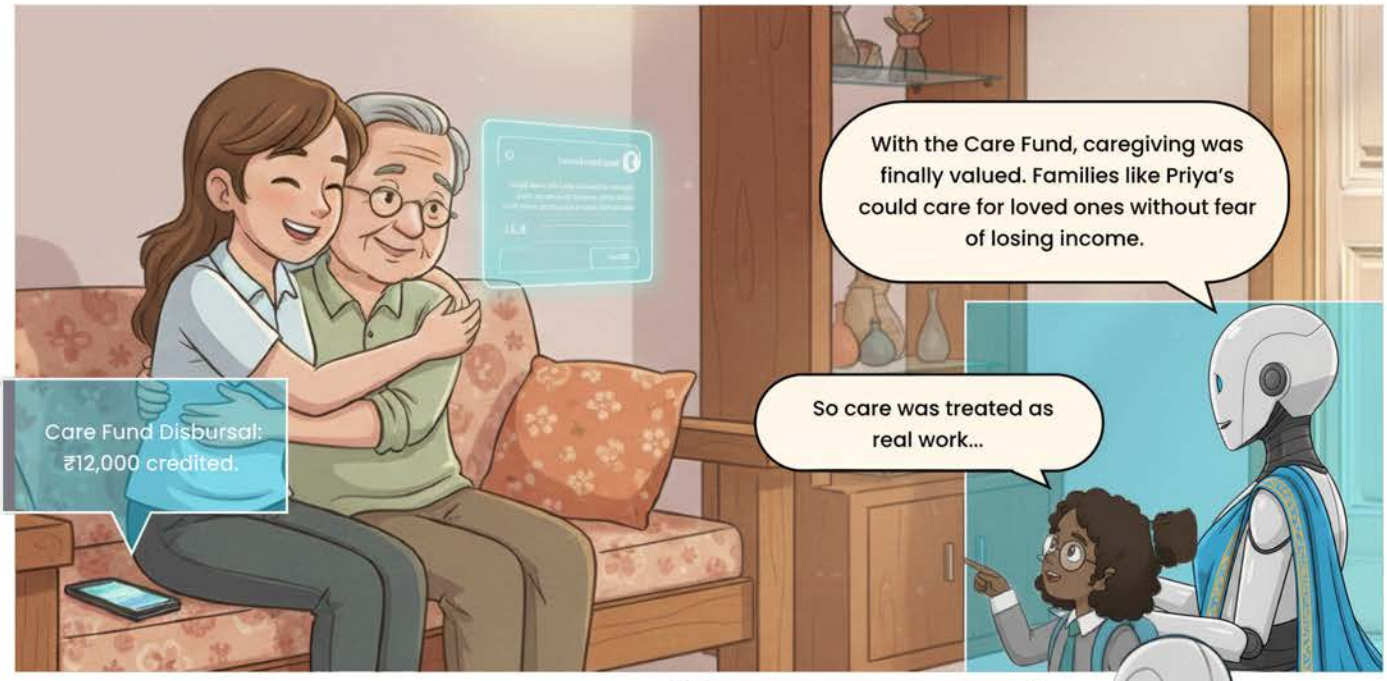
Implementing care reform at scale will require political will and coalition-building. The Ministry of Women and Child Development could lead the charge on designing the Care Fund and literacy programs, in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance (for funding) and MoSPI (for data). Partnerships with state governments are vital–states can pilot cash-for-care schemes and scale those that work. The private sector can be incentivized through CSR contributions to the Care Fund or awards for "family-friendly workplaces." Civil society and women's organizations will be critical for outreach–both to identify deserving beneficiaries and to monitor that benefits reach them. Financially, while remunerating unpaid work is ambitious, even a modest starting investment in the Care Fund could yield high social returns by enabling more women to work paid jobs (broadening the tax base) and improving health outcomes (reducing public healthcare burden through better at-home care). International examples (like Europe's caregiver allowances,[56] or South Africa's community health worker stipends)[57] can offer models. Ultimately, valuing care is not just a welfare measure but a structural economic reform–one that future-proofs India for an aging society and unlocks the full potential of its youth, particularly young women.

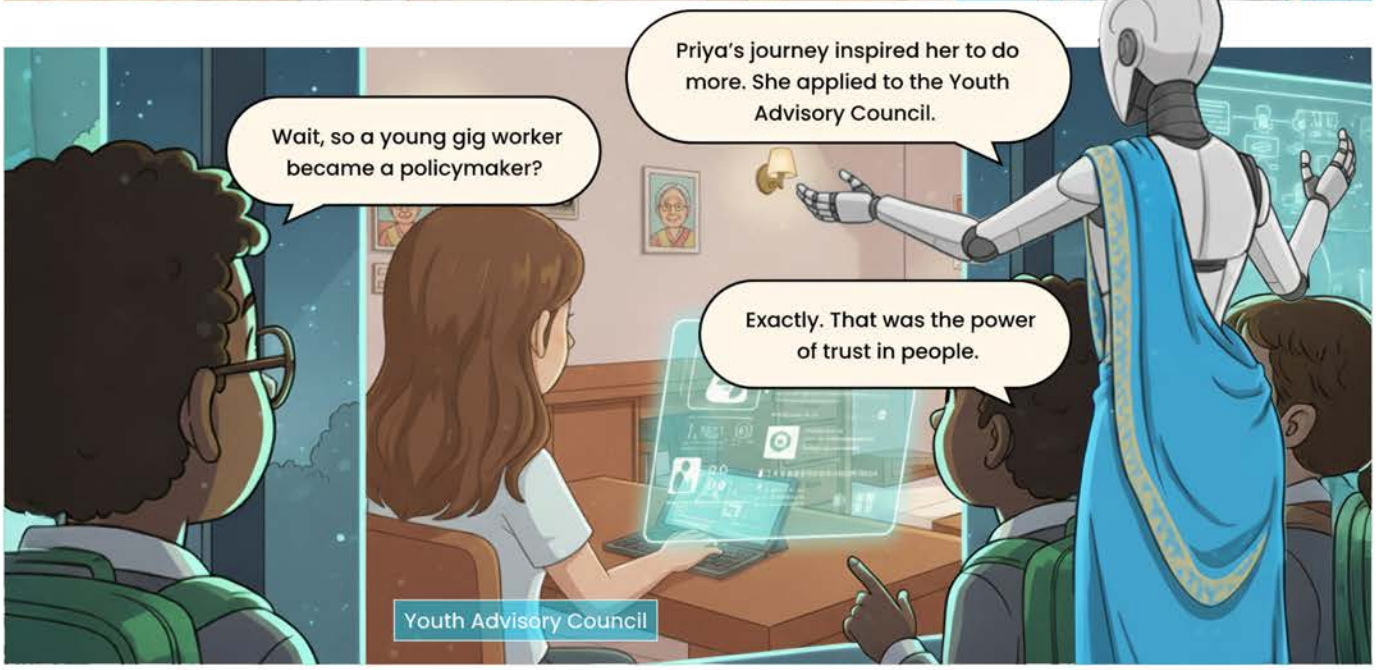


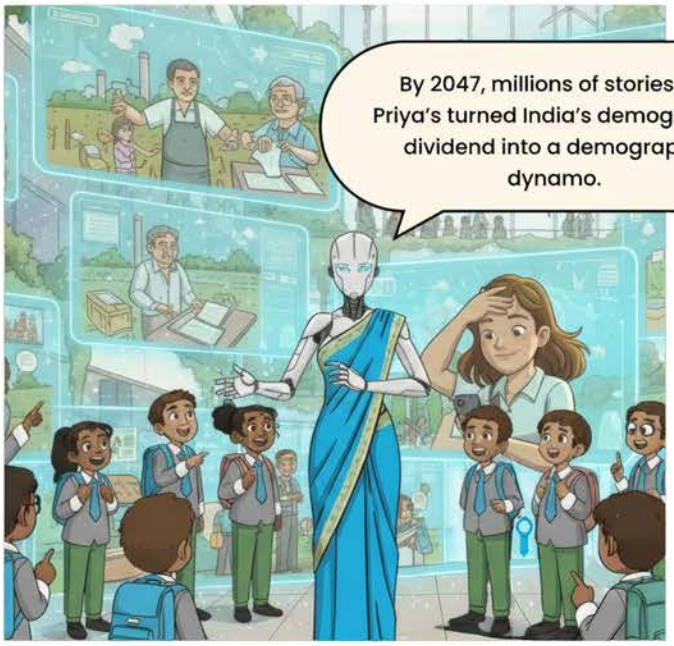

Demographic Trends
FUTURES MUSEUM
Every future begins with people. India once asked: how do we turn our young population into our greatest strength?

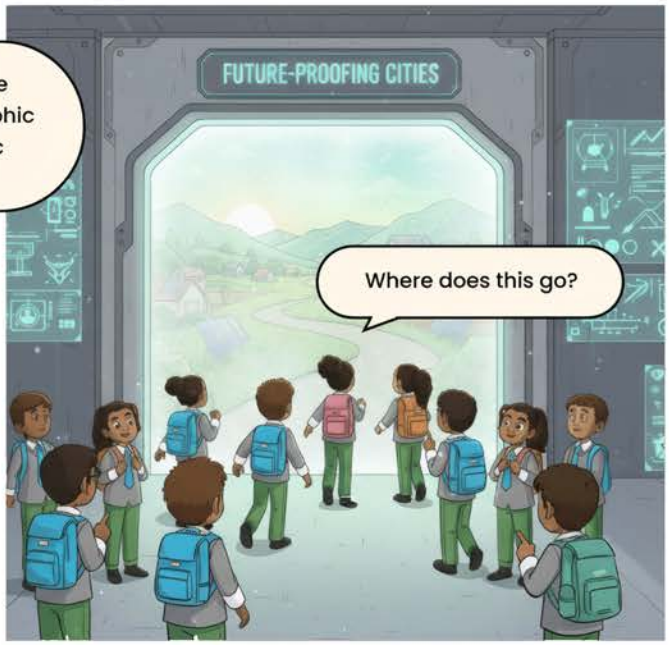

Let me tell you the story of Priya. She was one of the first to benefit from India's reforms in work, care, and youth leadership.
Priya riding her e-scooter


Thanks to the Gig Work Commission, Priya's freelancing and gig working job both were recognised, allowing her to have healthcare, maternity leave, and social security.
Shift Complete - Maternity Benefits Available


Care Fund Disbursal: ₹12,000 credited.
With the Care Fund, caregiving was finally valued. Families like Priya's could care for loved ones without fear of losing income.
So care was treated as real work...


Wait, so a young gig worker became a policymaker?
Priya's journey inspired her to do more. She applied to the Youth Advisory Council.
Exactly. That was the power of trust in people.
Youth Advisory Council


By 2047, millions of stories like Priya's turned India's demographic dividend into a demographic dynamo.


FUTURE-PROOFING CITIES
Where does this go?

Rapid Urbanization

Building Next-Generation Cities

We are witnessing one of the largest urban transitions in human history unfold in India. By 2050, more than half of the world will live in cities,[58] with India alone projected to add 600 million urban dwellers by 2036[59] and contributing to one of the largest shifts in human settlement. For our generation, this transformation brings both daunting challenges and unique opportunities. On the one hand, we already feel the pressures of housing shortages, congested roads, rising pollution, and crumbling infrastructure.[60] Our cities increasingly resemble concrete jungles,[61] crowding out nature and local identities are fading. On the other, we see a chance to reimagine how our cities are designed–to make them engines of productivity, innovation, and dignity.

> *"Growing up in my city, I witnessed the disappearance of lakes, rivers, and forests. These are not just landscapes; they are our natural inheritance, the roots of our identity. When we lose them, we lose a part of who we are."*
>
> **Manav, 25, a budding journalist**

But urban growth tells only half the story. We know from our own villages and small towns that rural communities are often left behind. The rural share of India's population is projected to fall below 50% by mid-century.[62] Without urgent action, many of our peers will be forced to leave their homes and migrate en masse to overloaded metros, not because they want to, but because they have no opportunities where they are.[63]

We believe India's goal must be twofold: to make our cities inclusive and livable, and to rejuvenate our villages as centers of growth. In other words, we need to build a future where young people can thrive whether they choose an urban or a rural life.

We recognize the government is already working on both fronts–the **Smart Cities Mission** has positioned 100 cities as innovation hubs,[64] while the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) is improving basic services in 500 cities.[65] At the same time, programs like the **Rurban Mission**,[66] and the **Startup Village Entrepreneurship Program**,[67] are helping infuse enterprise into rural areas. Yet in our consultations and research, we found that these efforts often operate in silos. What we propose is a more cohesive approach–one that integrates these initiatives so that urban and rural transformation go hand-in-hand, ensuring no young Indian is left behind in this transition.

Rapid Urbanization

To power sustainable, and resilient people-centered cities

Quick Win: Launch Smart Village Hubs in high-migration regions to provide digital infrastructure, skills, and incubation so that migration becomes a choice, not a necessity.

Moonshot: Scale a Jan Bhagidari (People's Participation) Framework, embedding participatory budgeting and Urban Futures Labs in every major city so citizens co-create budgets and plans.

Quick Win

Smart Village Hubs–Bridging the Urban-Rural Opportunity Gap

Objective: We have seen how migration shapes the lives of young people across India. Many of us leave our homes not by choice, but because opportunities are concentrated in cities. To change this, we propose creating Smart Village Hubs–local centers that bring digital infrastructure, skills training, mentorship, and incubation directly to villages. These hubs would turn rural areas into attractive places to live, work, and start businesses–giving young people the freedom to choose their futures without being forced to migrate.

The idea of stemming migration by improving rural livelihoods is not new, but our consultations confirmed that it is gaining urgency as India urbanizes. India's Voluntary National Review 2025 also recognizes that focusing only on metros is insufficient and calls for empowering rural clusters.[68] We see promising beginnings in initiatives like the **Rurban Mission**, which is creating hybrid rural–urban clusters with better infrastructure,[69] and private efforts such as "*Yuva Junction*," which is skilling rural youth.[70]

> *"Why don't we develop our own villages so that we don't have to migrate in the first place and can find good job opportunities close to home?"*
>
> **Chiranjit, a migrant to Silchar**



At Ahmedabad's The Riverside School, Next Generation India Fellows Prachi and Gunraagh spark dialogue on rapid urbanization

Action Plan

We propose dedicated Smart Village Hubs in high out-migration regions that combine infrastructure, technology, and entrepreneurship support into one cohesive model:

Digital and Physical Infrastructure

Each hub could provide reliable internet connectivity through BharatNet or similar broadband,[71] a co-working or community space with computers and tools, and uninterrupted electricity. In essence, we imagine urban-style innovation labs in rural India. These hubs would be gathering spaces where youth come together to learn, collaborate, and launch projects without having to relocate.

Skills and Incubation Programs

Hubs would host workshops in future-ready domains–digital skills like coding and marketing, green skills like solar panel installation and sustainable farming, and local vocational skills like food processing or design. Local entrepreneurs who succeeded in the region and external experts could serve as mentors. We propose a micro-accelerator function: supporting youth-led enterprises by connecting them to seed funding or microcredit, and guiding them through loan applications. By functioning as incubators, hubs could help youth convert local challenges into business opportunities–for instance, creating an app linking farmers directly to markets or building solar-powered cold storage for perishable crops.

Community-Led Expansion of Services

We believe hubs should be empowered to identify local needs and develop youth-led projects in response. If a village lacks healthcare, the hub could coordinate a telemedicine center staffed by trained local youth. If water scarcity is a problem, the hub could support a startup installing rainwater harvesting systems. This model improves livability in villages and also gives young Indians a stake in their community's growth, aligning with the participatory approach embedded in India's development goals.

What it Takes

The Ministry of Rural Development, along with the Ministries of Skill Development and Youth Affairs, could spearhead the Smart Village Hubs initiative. State governments would need to lead on-the-ground implementation–for instance, Punjab's Innovation Mission,[72] or Kerala's Startup Mission could pilot hubs in their states.[73] Each hub could operate as a public–private partnership: local governments provide space and basic funds, a respected NGO or educational institution manages operations, and companies contribute through CSR, whether by donating equipment or sponsoring skill programs.

We suggest that a multi-stakeholder steering committee at each hub–including panchayat leaders, youth representatives, and mentors–ensure the model stays responsive to local needs. Key metrics such as reduced youth migration, new enterprises created, and increased rural incomes should be tracked to measure success. At the national level, the government could establish a "**Hub Fund**" that states apply competitively, with readiness and need as criteria. International donors focused on rural development and digital empowerment could also be tapped.

Over time, hubs could be scaled nationwide and networked together, enabling a youth in one village to collaborate with peers across India. Ultimately, Smart Village Hubs would transform rural India by embedding opportunities where people live–so that "city or village" becomes a matter of preference, not survival.

Moonshot

Jan Bhagidari Model–Making Cities Inclusive through Participatory Governance

Objective: We want deeper, everyday democracy in our cities. Our proposal is a Jan Bhagidari (People's Participation) Framework—with participatory budgeting and citywide "urban labs"—so development is co-created with citizens, especially young people, leading to more livable and equitable cities.

As our cities expand, we keep seeing top-down planning miss local needs and marginalize communities. There's a better way—and it's already proving itself in India and around the world: give residents real power to shape budgets and projects. From participatory budgeting that builds trust and services like in Porto Alegre,[74] to Copenhagen's neighborhood councils that co-design urban renewal,[75] the evidence is clear. India has piloted similar approaches—from ward-level voting on local works in places like Pune,[76] to village-level drives like *Prashasan Gaon Ki Aur*.[77]

To truly harness youth ideas and energy in city-building, participation now needs to move beyond ad-hoc experiments to a structured framework across *all* cities.

> *"When I helped conduct a participatory budgeting pilot in Pune, there were some young people who showed active involvement. From 600 people participating, in a year, the number went to 10,000 when youth became involved. That's the power of youth."*
>
> **Naim Keruwala, Regional Director, South and West Asia at C40 Cities**



Bangalore youth share about traffic and mobility challenges.

Action Plan

We recommend implementing a Jan Bhagidari Urban Governance Framework with two key pillars:

Urban Futures Labs

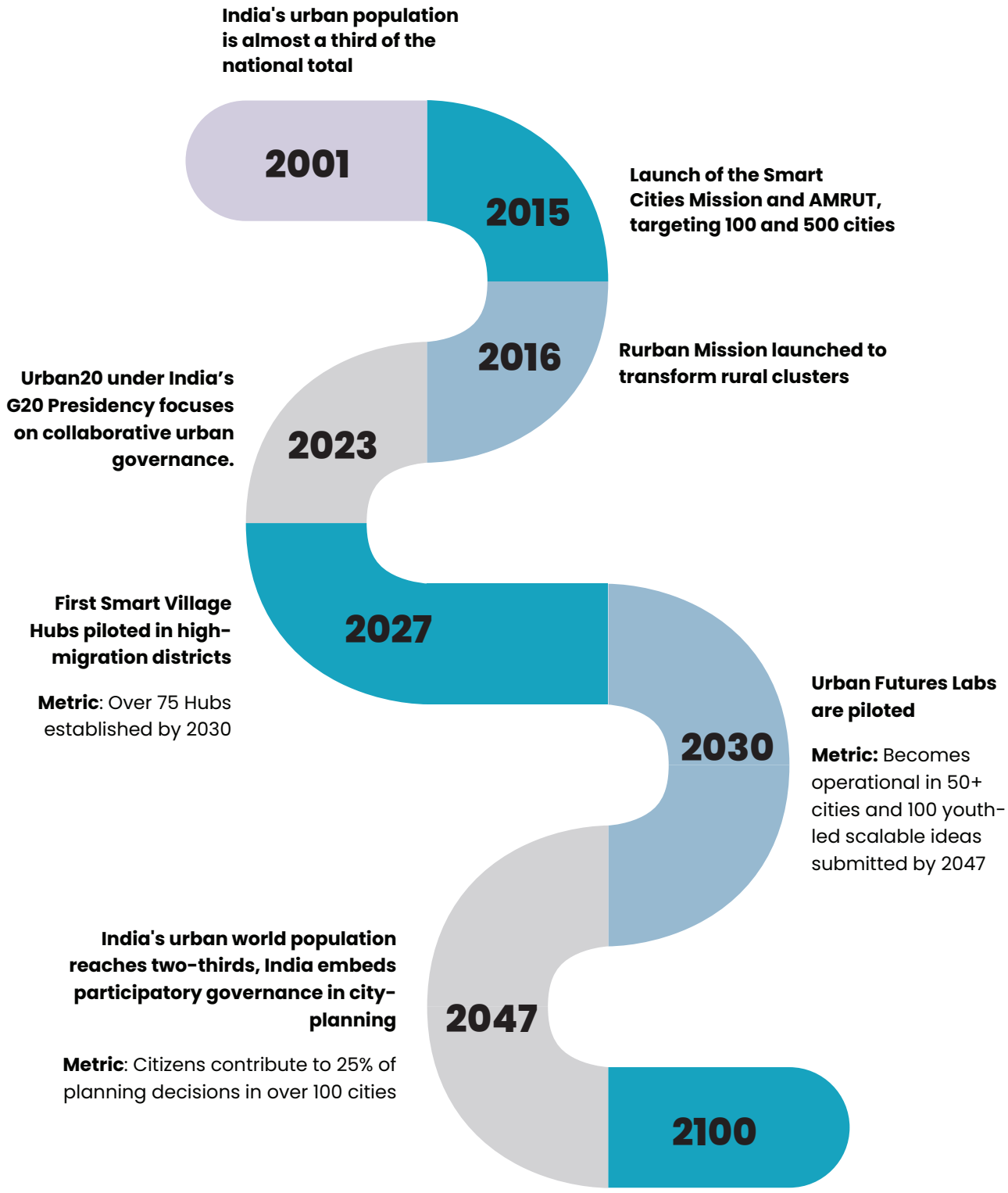
Every major city establishes an **Urban Futures Lab**—a think-and-do space where young professionals, students, urban planners, and municipal officials work together to solve city problems. These labs could host hackathons, open-data challenges, and pilot projects. For example, a lab might launch a competition for young architects to design safer public spaces or affordable housing, and then mentor the winning ideas into actual implementation. While connected to the city government (through a Smart City SPV or a Metropolitan Planning Committee), these labs should be run by independent teams of young innovators and experts. That way, promising pilots aren't lost after a single event but feed directly into policy. By giving us access to tools, data, and small grants, the labs can become pipelines of youth-led solutions that make our cities more creative, responsive, and future-ready.

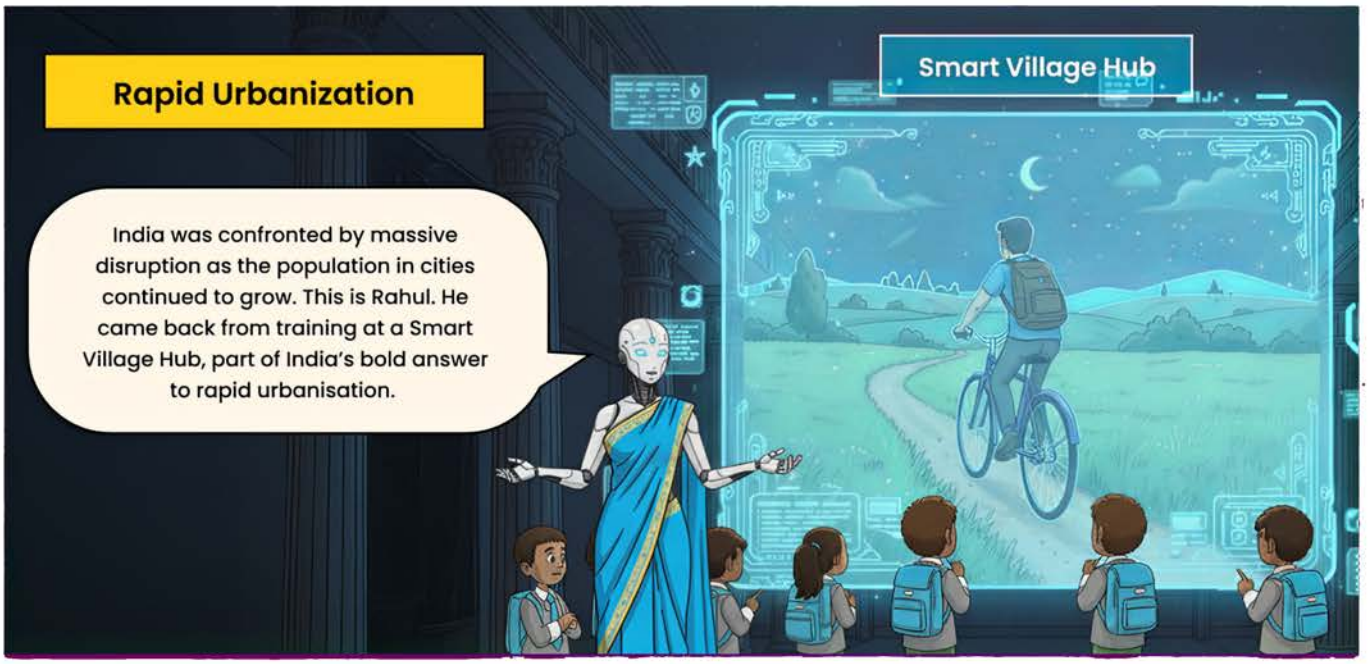
Participatory Budgeting at Scale

Enabling citizens directly to decide how a share of local budgets is spent. A good starting point would be one pilot city or municipality in each state running a full budgeting cycle: residents brainstorm project ideas (parks, streetlights, clinics), engineers cost them, citizens vote—either in neighborhood meetings or via digital platforms—and the city implements the winners. To ensure our voices are included, participatory budgeting should be supported by youth councils and online platforms. This way, issues young people care deeply about—like sports facilities, safety in public spaces, or better transport—become part of city priorities. Over time, we believe participatory budgeting could expand to all large cities by 2030, with national guidelines and incentives helping states scale. The power of participatory budgeting is that it teaches trade-offs, fosters transparency, and shifts spending to where communities say it's needed most—often in the neglected wards where basics matter most.

What it Takes

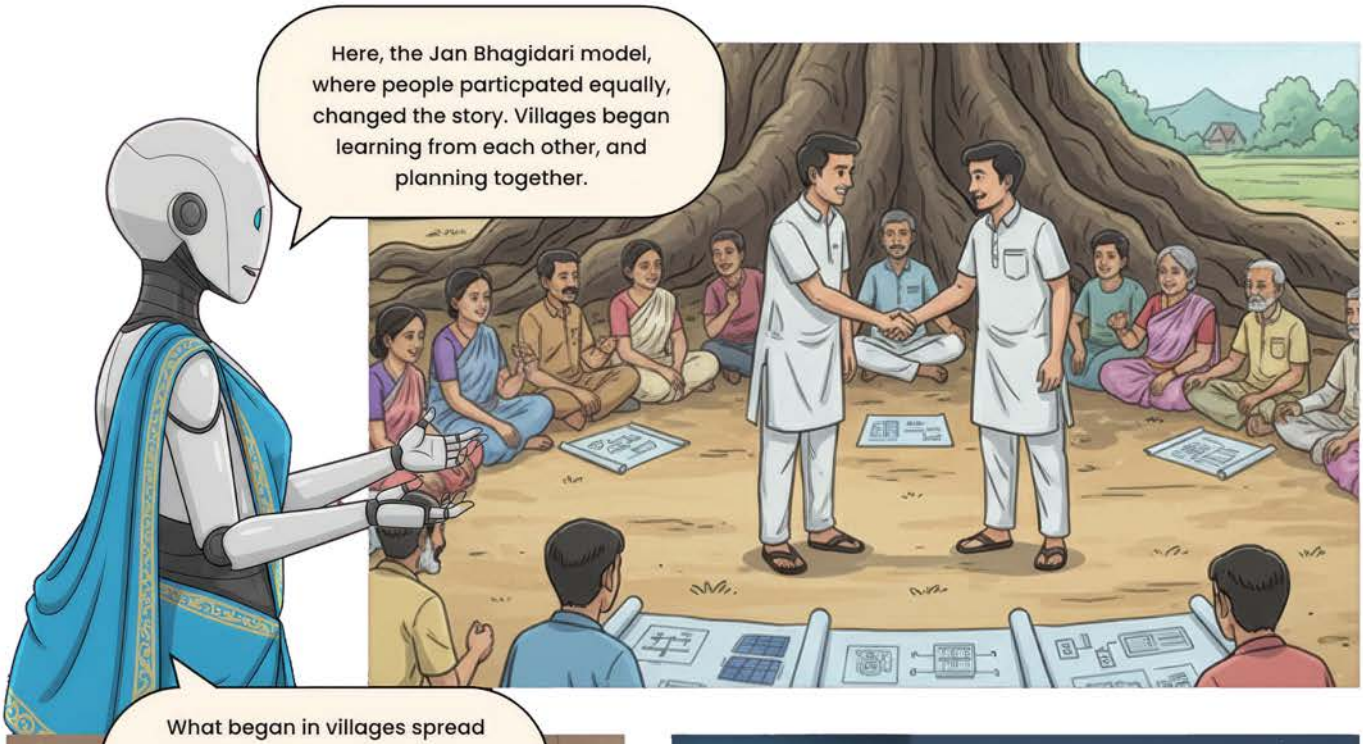
Institutionalizing participatory governance needs both top-down support and bottom-up engagement. The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs could issue a national participatory budgeting framework and a practical **toolkit** (drawing on UN-Habitat's participatory decision-making guides),[78] which could potentially be set up under the **Urban Challenge Fund** that incentivizes cities to become growth hubs.[79] It could also train municipal staff and ward officers to facilitate inclusive meetings, run digital voting, and co-design projects. This would involve partnering with local NGOs, universities, and civic-tech teams to convene residents and analyze ideas. Where needed, state municipalities could formally allocate a budget slice to citizen decision-making and to recognize Urban Futures Labs as advisory/innovation partners. If successful, the approach can extend to rural governance through gram sabhas, linking with the 73rd Amendment spirit. By 2047, **Jan Bhagidari** can be simply "how we do things" in India's cities—a democratic innovation worthy of the world's largest democracy at 100, with young people co-authoring the future of their places.

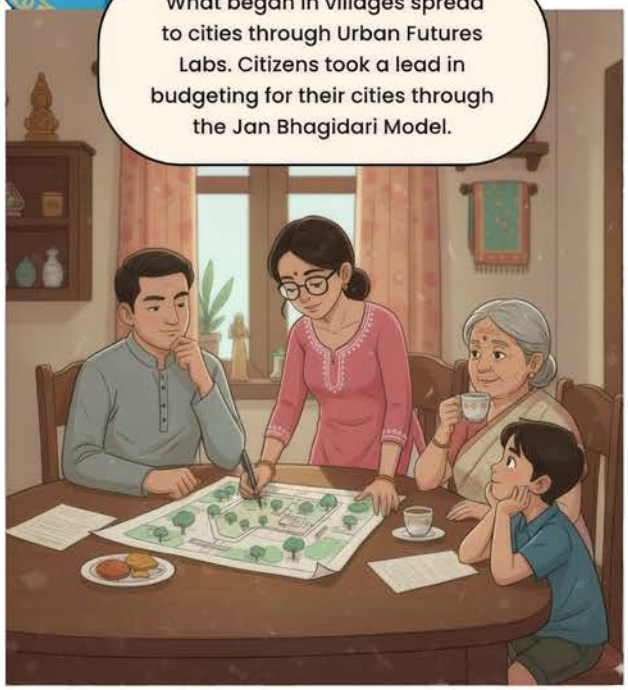

India's urban population is almost a third of the national total
2001
2015
Launch of the Smart Cities Mission and AMRUT, targeting 100 and 500 cities
2016
Rurban Mission launched to transform rural clusters
Urban20 under India's G20 Presidency focuses on collaborative urban governance.
2023
2027
First Smart Village Hubs piloted in high-migration districts
Metric: Over 75 Hubs established by 2030
2030
Urban Futures Labs are piloted
Metric: Becomes operational in 50+ cities and 100 youth-led scalable ideas submitted by 2047
India's urban world population reaches two-thirds, India embeds participatory governance in city-planning
Metric: Citizens contribute to 25% of planning decisions in over 100 cities
2047
2100
India's Janbhagidari model is globally recognised as a benchmark for inclusive urban governance, guiding equitable city planning across young countries

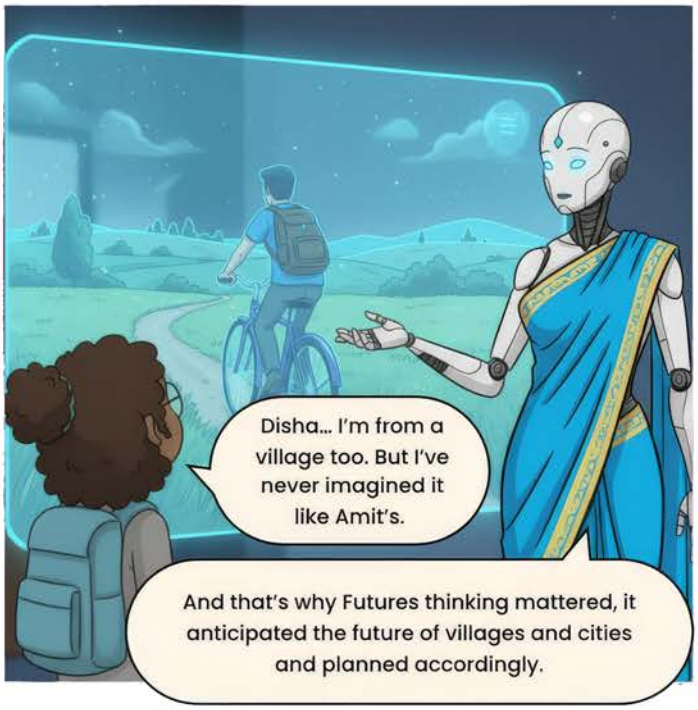

Rapid Urbanization
Smart Village Hub
India was confronted by massive disruption as the population in cities continued to grow. This is Rahul. He came back from training at a Smart Village Hub, part of India's bold answer to rapid urbanisation.


Instead of leaving for the city, Rahul brought solutions back.
He's like a young engineer and leader in one!

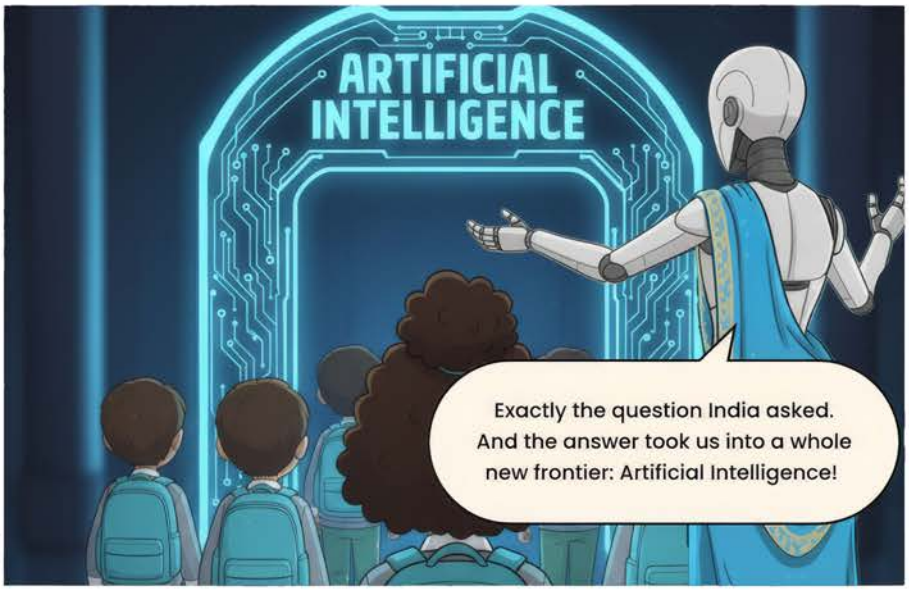

But not every village had this chance. Just a few kilometers away, Amit's community struggled with the old problems of neglect.


Here, the Jan Bhagidari model, where people particpated equally, changed the story. Villages began learning from each other, and planning together.


What began in villages spread to cities through Urban Futures Labs. Citizens took a lead in budgeting for their cities through the Jan Bhagidari Model.


Disha... I'm from a village too. But I've never imagined it like Amit's.
And that's why Futures thinking mattered, it anticipated the future of villages and cities and planned accordingly.


If villages and cities could change so much... what about everything else? What about the things even bigger than us?


ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE
Exactly the question India asked. And the answer took us into a whole new frontier: Artificial Intelligence!



Artificial Intelligence

Innovation and Skilling

We are living through one of the most dramatic technological revolutions in history, led by Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital technologies. As Fellows, we see India at the very forefront of both opportunity and risk in this transformation. On one hand, our tech sector is booming: India's AI market is growing at 25–35% annually,[80] private AI investment reached $1.4 billion making India a top-10 AI investor country in 2023,[81] and the government has committed over $1.25 billion to build AI capacity.[82] Initiatives like the IndiaAI Mission,[83] and new AI Centres of Excellence are underway.[84] Young Indians–Generation AI–are quick adopters; in our survey, one in three of us expressed hopefulness about AI's potential. We already see inspiring examples–from teenagers building AI health tools to startups tackling local challenges with AI-powered solutions.[85]

> *"The impacts of AI are going to be enormously vast and uneven: a young woman in a rural area might not even have a laptop, yet she is directly impacted by algorithmic decision-making."*
>
> **Neha Shukla, 20, AI Ethicist working with the World Economic Forum**

But our research and conversations also made clear that these technologies bring risks with them. By some estimates, AI-driven automation could threaten half of entry-level jobs in India,[86] even as nearly 8 million jobs must be created annually to cater to its young workforce.[87]

Digital divides continue–many of us still don't have smartphones or reliable internet,[88] meaning the benefits AI provides could remain uneven. Concerns around privacy, algorithmic bias, and misinformation are urgent: 76% of young people we engaged reported encountering online misinformation regularly, and only 2% said they could reliably spot fake news.[89] The challenge, then, is twofold: to **govern technology responsibly** (to mitigate risks and protects our rights) and to **empower young people through technology** (to access the skills and opportunities of the digital economy).

The following strategies are our proposals for how India can lead in AI in a way that is inclusive and ethical.

Artificial Intelligence

Establishing guidelines for inclusive and ethical AI for social good and growth



Quick Win: Create a Panel on AI & Emerging Tech with youth representation, acting as a rapid-response ethics body.

Moonshot: Adopt a Skills-First Education Model that shifts hiring from degrees to demonstrated skills, preparing India's youth for jobs that do not even exist yet.

Quick Win

Panel on AI and Emerging Tech–Adaptive Governance for a Fast-Changing Landscape

Objective: We propose creating a permanent, multi-stakeholder Panel on AI and Emerging Technologies–an agile governance body that mandates AI's deployment ethically, inclusively, and in step with society's needs, while also responding rapidly to threats like, misinformation, and algorithmic bias.

India has already begun important steps in tech governance–from the **Digital Personal Data Protection Act** to guidelines on AI's responsible use.[90] We also saw India play a global role by chairing the **Global Partnership on AI (GPAI)**,[91] and co-hosting a summit focusing centered around AI for All.[92] Yet, policy is struggling to keep pace with the breakneck speed of technological change; advisories issued in 2024 had to be revised within months,[93] underscoring the challenges of keeping policy in-step with fast-moving technologies. From our perspective, a new approach is required–one that combines regulatory authority with foresight and flexibility, and includes youth voices at the table.

> *"AI increasingly influences our education, our careers, and even the way we discover new opportunities, yet few have been taught how to leverage it."*
>
> **Vignesh, 26, studying abroad and originally from Chennai**



A young student shares how AI is reshaping his schoolwork

Action Plan

We propose that the **National Panel on AI and Emerging Tech**, under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, have three main components:

Rapid Response Ethics Board

A core ethics review board that addresses AI-related incidents within 30 days. It could investigate discriminatory algorithms, deepfake misinformation campaigns, and major data breaches,recommending corrective action. For instance, if an AI tool in banking unfairly rejected women's loan applications, the board could require audits and fixes. This board should be diverse, consisting of–government officials, industry leaders, ethicists, legal scholars, and crucially, youth representatives, ensuring the next generation most impacted by new tech has a real say.

Futures and Foresight Wing

A horizon-scanning team conducting quarterly foresight roundtables comprising AI researchers, startups, civil society, and young people. It would publish an annual **State of Tech Futures Report** with policy recommendations. This anticipatory function means India doesn't just react but prepares for the next wave whether that involves–AI in education or quantum computing. Youth participation could come through hackathons and scenario-writing contests, channeling our creativity into national strategy.

Guidance and Standards Setting

The panel could draft **national frameworks** regarding AI ethics, algorithmic transparency, privacy-by-design, and fairness audits. It would help organize efforts across ministries and align India's approach with global best practices–while asserting perspectives from the Global South. For instance, it could recommend labeling AI-generated content to fight deepfakes or develop guidelines for impact assessments of algorithms before deploying AI in sensitive sectors like policing or welfare.

What it Takes

The panel should be set up via executive order or legislation, anchored in the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY). Funding could come from a mix of government allocations and industry contributions. India has previously had foresight experience in this space, specifically with the Technology Information, Forecasting and Assessment Council (TIFAC),[94] and high-level advisory bodies such as the Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Prime Minister.[95] The real credibility will come from transparency: publishing reports, consulting the public, and showing impact. With time, this panel could shape India's domestic standards as well as its global norms, creating a paradigm where young, developing countries influence the rules of the game rather than simply adopting Silicon Valley's.

Moonshot

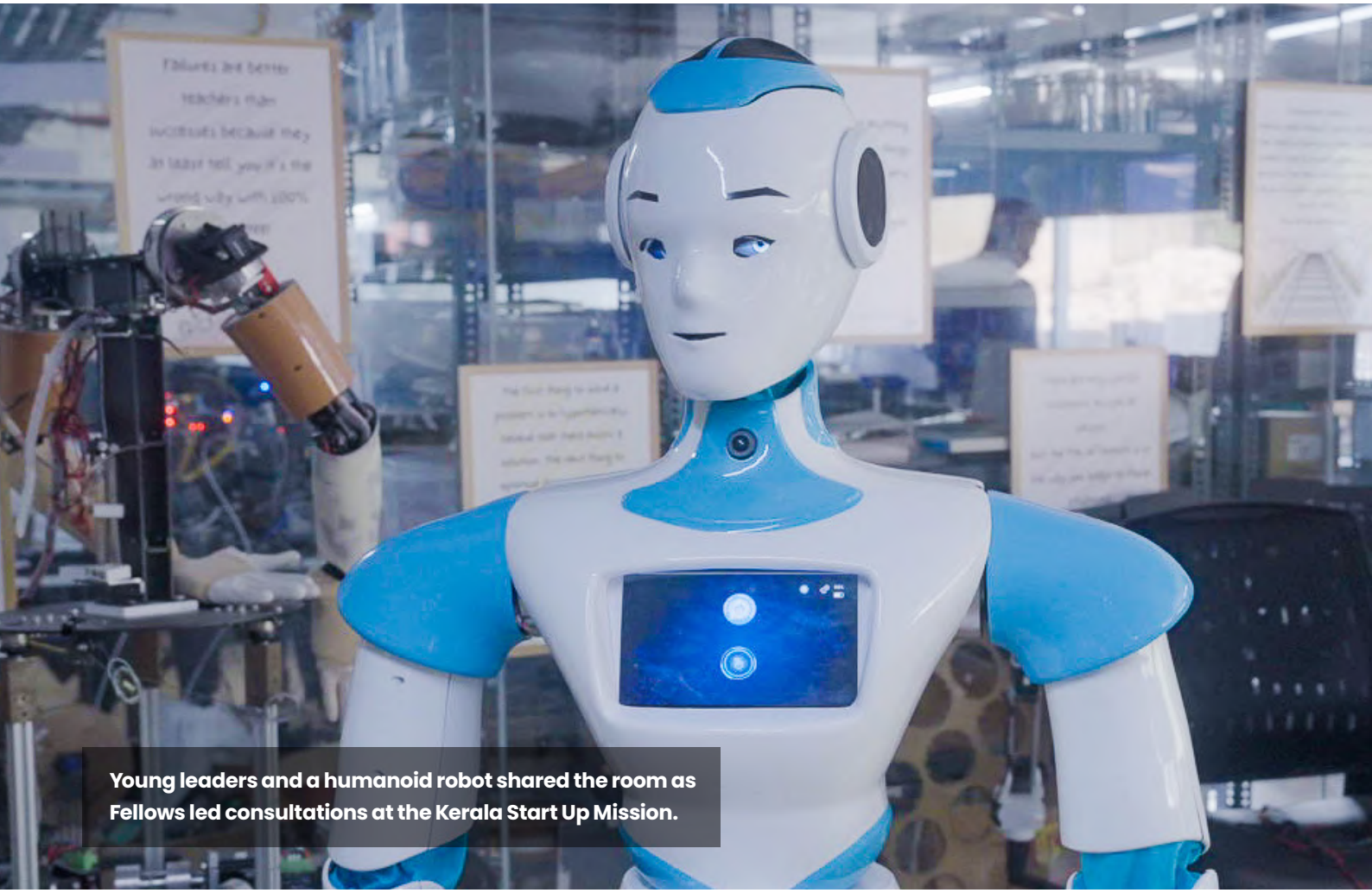
Skills-First Education Model–Preparing India's Youth for the Future of Work

Objective: Adopt a Skills-First Education Model that shifts hiring from degrees to demonstrated skills, preparing India's youth for jobs that do not even exist yet.

We hear every day from young people who ask: *"Will my degree actually prepare me for a job?"* Too often, the answer is no. Traditional rote learning and degree-centric hiring are leaving graduates unemployed or underemployed, even when paper qualifications look good.

Nearly half of India's graduates were deemed unemployable.[96] The rise of AI makes this urgency sharper: as some skills vanish, the ability to continuously learn and adapt becomes essential. We propose a **Skills-First Education Model**–one that values what people can *do*, not just the degree they hold, and embeds future-oriented skills at every stage of learning.

> *"Currently, students and young professionals use personal time, money, and initiative to stay relevant. This is an unfair and unequal approach that only a few can keep up with."*
>
> **Navya, 26, UI-UX designer in Bengaluru**



Young leaders and a humanoid robot shared the room as Fellows led consultations at the Kerala Start Up Mission.

Action Plan

National Worker Voucher Program

We propose a "Skill Voucher" system to support lifelong learning, built on the example of India's educational vouchers.[97] Each young person could receive vouchers (partially government-subsidized, co-funded by employers) redeemable at certified training providers. A gig worker, for instance, might use vouchers to take a coding bootcamp or an advanced manufacturing course. Over time, every youth could build a **digital skills wallet**–a portfolio of credentials topping up regularly through their careers.

Curriculum Overhaul–Technical and Human Skills

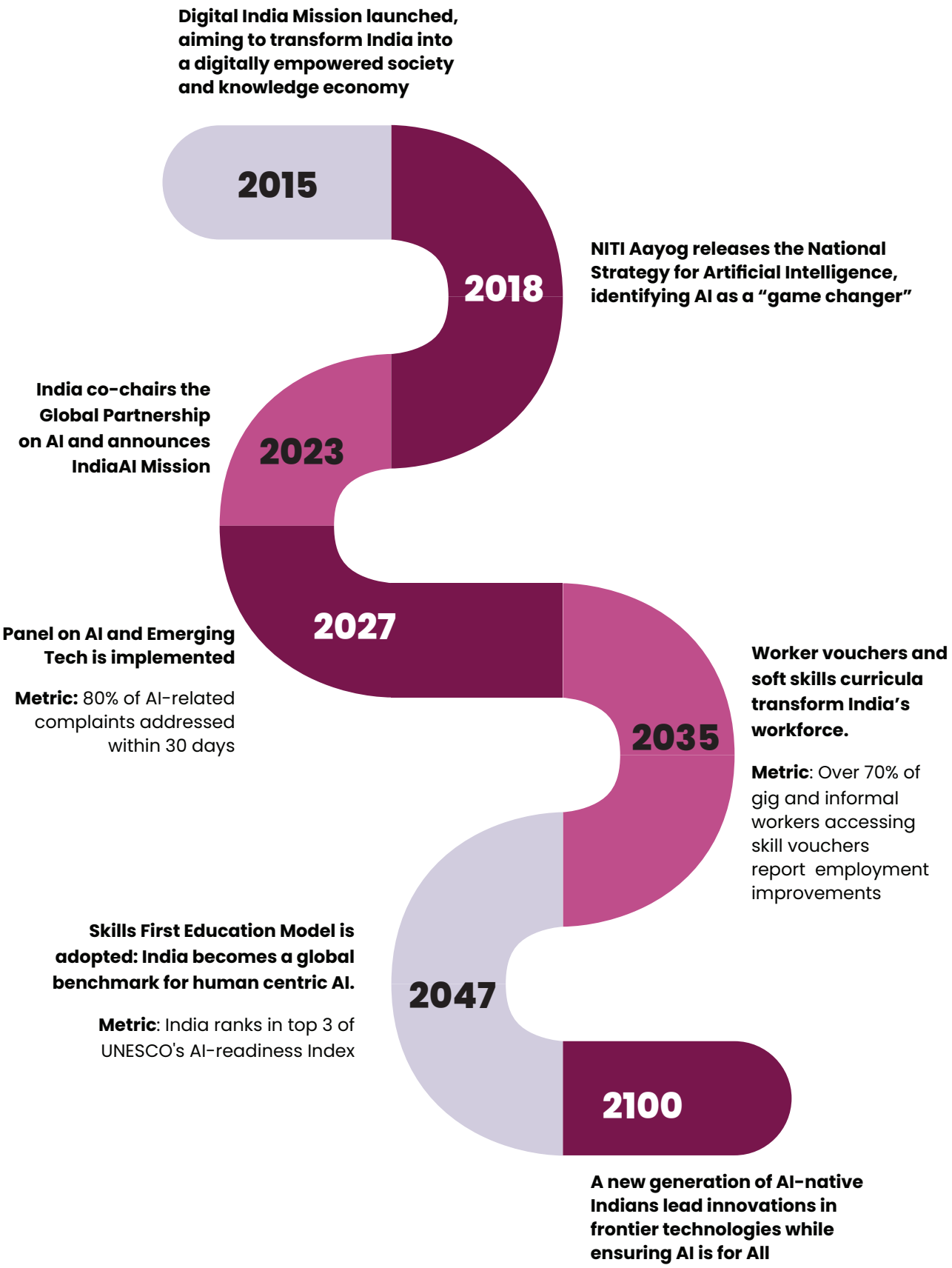
We propose embedding both technical and human skills in curricula. That means AI literacy, coding, and data analysis across disciplines–not just for engineers, but for commerce or humanities students too. Equally, we must prioritize problem-solving, creativity, teamwork, and empathy. Project-based learning, internships, and community engagement could be made mandatory so that every graduate leaves with real-world experience. This model builds on NEP recommendations by introducing soft skills that Indian companies are looking for.[98] By aligning curricula with the **National Education Policy 2020** and industry needs, education would become truly future-ready.

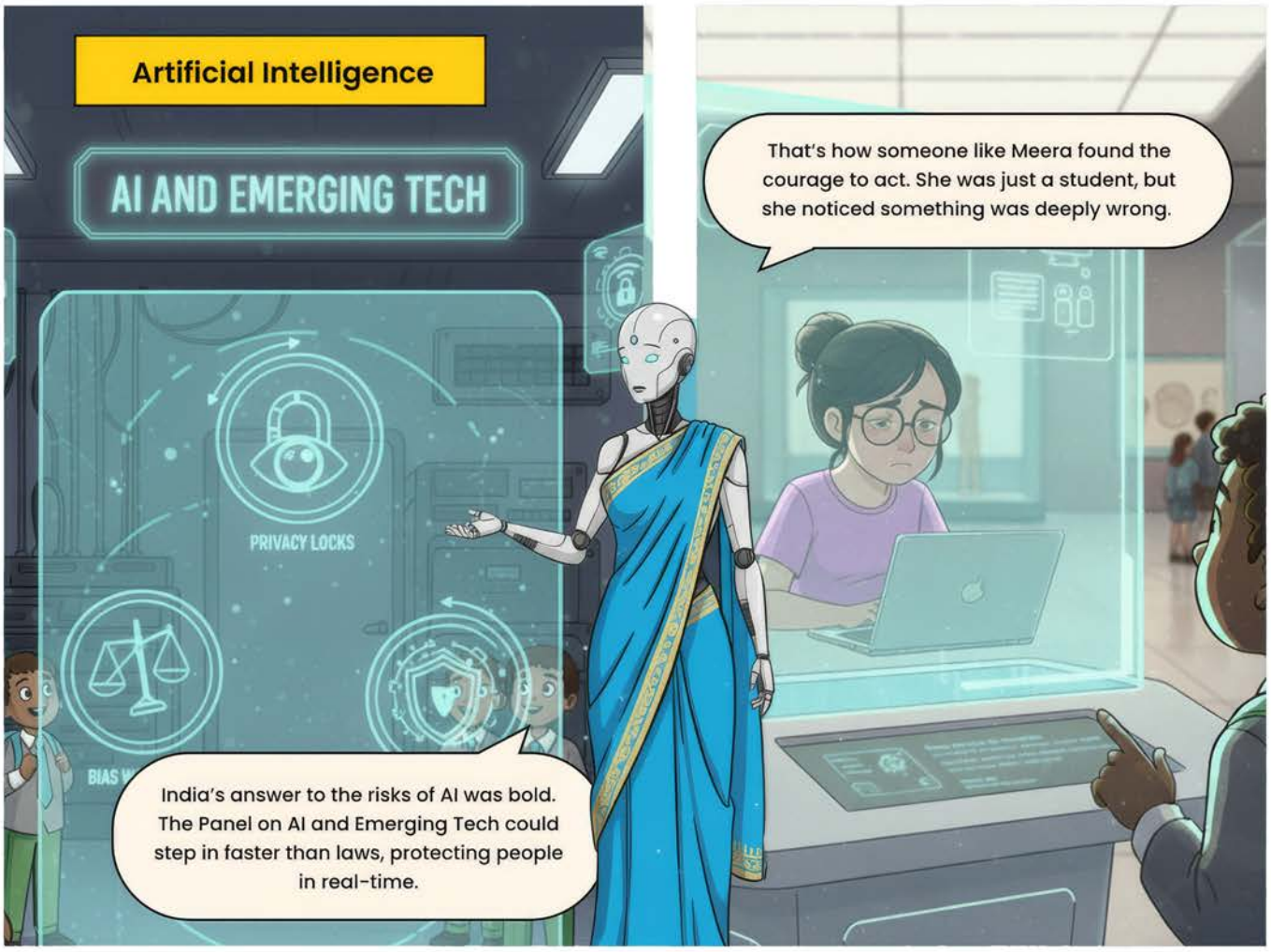
Industry-Academia Linkages and Alternative Credentials

We propose stronger industry-academia partnerships. Sectoral Skill Councils could continuously update desired skillsets and design short micro-courses. Employers should recognize certifications from online platforms and vocational institutes on par with traditional degrees. The government can lead by example: reforming its hiring to test for skills, not just degrees. Apprenticeships and dual-education models should be expanded. This ecosystem would allow multiple pathways–academic or vocational–for young people to access good careers.

What it Takes

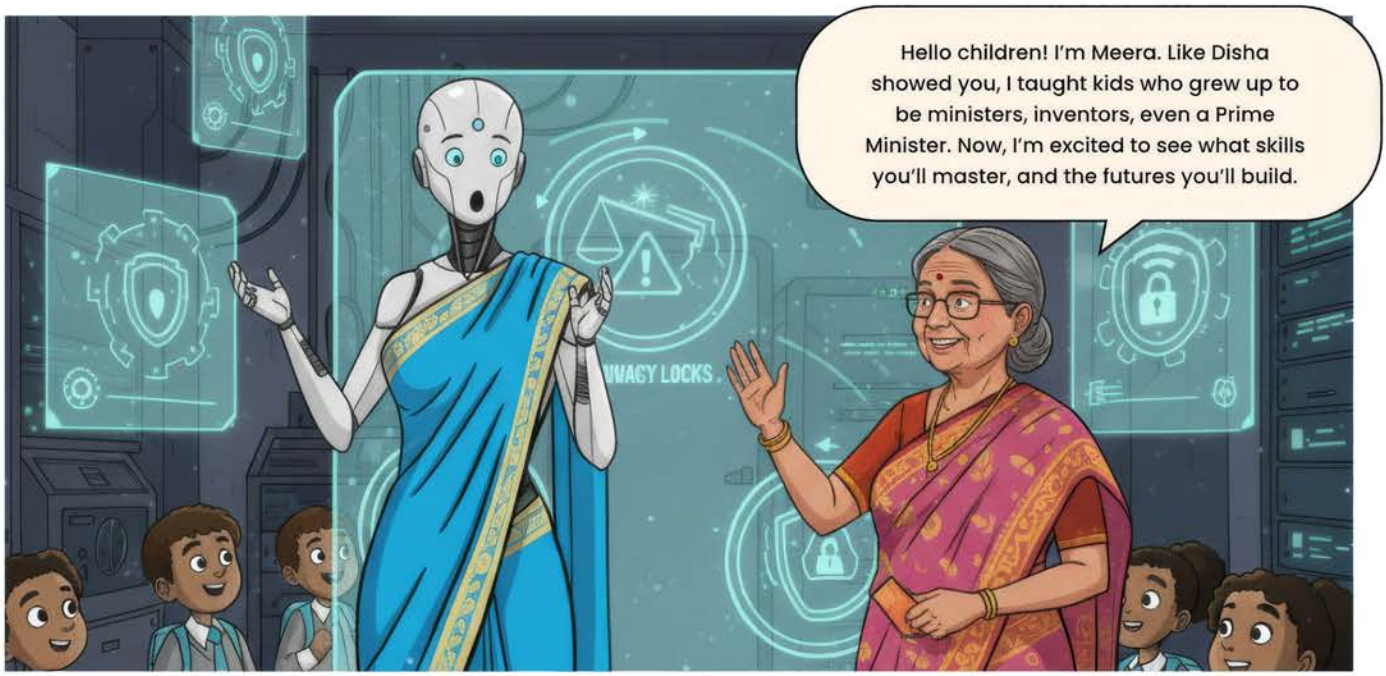
Implementing this model will require coordination between the Education, Skill Development, and Labor ministries. It will need investment in vouchers, digital infrastructure, and teacher training. Partnerships with ed-tech platforms and industry will be crucial for delivery at scale. Accreditation and quality assurance will ensure credibility of new credentials. Just as important, we need a cultural shift: families and employers must begin valuing skills and certifications alongside degrees. If government recruitment starts piloting skill-based exams, it will send a strong signal. By focusing on what every young Indian can do and nurturing that, we can safeguard against the churn of the AI age and ensure our youth are ready for the jobs of the future.


Digital India Mission launched, aiming to transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy
2015
2018
NITI Aayog releases the National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence, identifying AI as a "game changer"
India co-chairs the Global Partnership on AI and announces IndiaAI Mission
2023
2027
Panel on AI and Emerging Tech is implemented
Metric: 80% of AI-related complaints addressed within 30 days
2035
Worker vouchers and soft skills curricula transform India's workforce.
Metric: Over 70% of gig and informal workers accessing skill vouchers report employment improvements
Skills First Education Model is adopted: India becomes a global benchmark for human centric AI.
Metric: India ranks in top 3 of UNESCO's AI-readiness Index
2047
2100
A new generation of AI-native Indians lead innovations in frontier technologies while ensuring AI is for All


Artificial Intelligence
AI AND EMERGING TECH
PRIVACY LOCKS
That's how someone like Meera found the courage to act. She was just a student, but she noticed something was deeply wrong.
India's answer to the risks of AI was bold. The Panel on AI and Emerging Tech could step in faster than laws, protecting people in real-time.


She uncovered bias in a recruitment AI. And when she shared her story, the Panel heard her, and they acted.


Inspired by her experience, Meera became a teacher under the Skills First Education Model, training younger students to be future-ready.
Skills First


Hello children! I'm Meera. Like Disha showed you, I taught kids who grew up to be ministers, inventors, even a Prime Minister. Now, I'm excited to see what skills you'll master, and the futures you'll build.


I want to work on securing the planet's resources.


CLIMATE CHANGE
Well then, let's walk through this door.

Climate Change

Moving from climate anxiety to action

For our generation, climate change is not some far-off possibility; it's the daily reality of heatwaves, erratic monsoons, cyclones, floods, droughts, and air that makes us sick. These disruptions already affect millions of Indians, and if global warming persists, India could lose between 3–10% of GDP annually by 2100.[99] We are the ones who will live through the sharpest edge of these changes, but we are also the ones stepping up with solutions.

> *"When the Ockhi cyclone hit Kerala, older people shared that they had sensed a change in nature. Their insights were shaped by years of living closely with the land and sea. Now, we're bringing that wisdom into our disaster response efforts; young and old, working together to build resilience."*
>
> **Rajeemol, a social worker in Kochi**

India has shown that rapid progress is possible. We are proud that our country has already achieved 50% of its installed electricity capacity from non-fossil fuel sources—five years ahead of the 2030 target under the Paris Agreement.[100] This milestone signals accelerating momentum in the clean energy transition. We have also taken global leadership through the ISA,[101] the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure,[102] and the launch of Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment) to drive sustainable living.[103]

Climate Change

To turbocharge on climate change, moving from climate anxiety to climate action

Quick Win: Establish a Bharat Climate Knowledge Compendium, digitizing indigenous knowledge like water harvesting and cyclone-resistant architecture.

Moonshot: Build an India Supergrid, connecting renewable hotspots with communities nationwide—a decentralized, resilient, and green energy democracy.

Quick Win

Bharat Knowledge Compendium–Leveraging Indigenous and Local Knowledge for Climate Resilience

Objective: **We propose creating a Bharat Climate Knowledge Compendium—a national digital and physical repository that documents, validates, and shares traditional and local knowledge on sustainability, and climate adaptation. Importantly, youth must lead at every stage: gathering wisdom, testing ideas, and turning them into action.**

India has centuries of indigenous wisdom on how to co-exist with nature—from traditional farming techniques and water harvesting to herbal medicine, sacred groves, and community-led forest management. Such practices are often low-cost, locally adapted, and proven over generations. Yet many are at risk of being forgotten at precisely the time when we need them most.

We've already seen efforts like the **Traditional Knowledge Digital Library**,[104] which protects indigenous medicinal knowledge from biopiracy, and **People's Biodiversity Registers**, which document ecological practices in some regions.[105] But these need to go further. In our conversations, young people repeatedly told us how these traditional practices are disappearing, and the 2025 Voluntary National Review itself flagged concerns about this erosion.[106] We believe the Compendium can safeguard this heritage and translate it into actionable strategies for climate resilience.

> *"Coastal Students Cultural Forum. is like a community radio and local weather station where we interview indigenous community members about atmospheric changes and inform our neighborhood of such practices"*
>
> **Amos, a young climate warrior from Kerala working with young and marginalized communities**



In Kochi, a college student shares how climate change impacts his family's farm

Action Plan

Start with a bottom-up, evidence-based approach through:

Community-Led Documentation

We propose mobilizing youth volunteers nationwide through local systems to capture climate-resilient practices from elders, farmers, and healers in their communities. Envision documenting *tankas* in Rajasthan for rainwater harvesting,[107]cyclone-ready stilt houses along Odisha's coast,[108] or sacred groves preserved by Northeastern tribes.[109] Using simple mobile applications (audio, video, GPS), young people could build this record while working with panchayats and NGOs to guarantee trust and accuracy.

Scientific Validation

A panel of experts—agricultural universities, climate scientists, ecologists—would review, test, and validate practices. Validated practices would then be mainstreamed: drought-resistant seed varieties multiplied and distributed by the Agriculture Ministry, forest management practices adopted in state-level adaptation plans. The Compendium must not be a static archive but a **dynamic instrument** feeding directly into formal policy.

Dissemination and Global Leadership

We propose making the Compendium accessible in multiple local languages and formats—an interactive website, mobile app, radio capsules, and even comic-style guides for schools. This would make youth both contributors and beneficiaries. Internationally, India could extend its climate global leadership, evolving into an Adaptation Consortium to share indigenous wisdom across developing countries. To protect communities, GI tags and benefit-sharing agreements must be built in—so that if, for example, a herbal flood-control technique is commercialized, the originating community is recognized.

What it Takes

We propose that the initiative be anchored in the Department of Science and Technology by way of the Anusandhan National Research Foundation,[110] with the Ministries of Environment, Agriculture, Tribal Affairs, and Rural Development as key partners. Funding could draw from climate budgets or even rural employment schemes—imagine if workdays included knowledge documentation. Tech firms could build the platform as part of corporate social responsibility. It is important to note that this requires trust-building: working with community leaders and affirming intellectual property rights so that communities are never exploited.

To maximize impact, Compendium outputs should feed directly into **District Climate Action Plans**. Universities should encourage PhD research on documented practices, deepening scientific validation. With time, the Compendium could become a flagship of India's climate leadership—fortifying resilience, creating jobs for youth in documentation, and reviving cultural practices in the process.

Moonshot

India Supergrid Initiative–Powering a Green Future through Decentralized Renewable Energy

Objective: Build an India Supergrid, connecting renewable hotspots with communities nationwide—a decentralized, resilient, and green energy democracy.

India has actively promoted a clean energy transition through several initiatives. The National Solar Mission aimed to install 20 GW of solar capacity by 2022, a target that was later revised upward to 100 GW, reflecting growing ambition.[111] On the international front, India has championed a Global Biofuels Alliance,[112] and co-founded the ISA.[113] At home, initiatives like the PM Kisan Urja Suraksha Evam Utthan Mahabhiyan scheme are driving solar adoption at every level.[114]

But we see real challenges. Renewables like wind and solar are variable, and often far away from where energy demand is highest. India's grid is trying to improve its reliability and expand access in underserved communities, where power outages are a common occurrence or electricity is unavailable.[115] That's the challenge the Supergrid intends to address.

An India Supergrid could act as a next-generation power system that brings together massive renewable projects while decentralizing micro-grids. Think of it as an internet of energy: flexible, distributed, and interconnected. A grid built for both efficiency and equity, affording every young person in India, no matter where they live, access to clean power and the ability to shape a green future.



Next Generation India Fellows Saikot and Dhruvak head into Assam University to lead a Youth Consultation on climate change

Action Plan

Launch the India Supergrid Initiative with the following components:

Infrastructure for Interconnection

We imagine a future in which India's energy system is as smart, seamless, and connected as the internet. To get there, we need big upgrades: high-voltage transmission lines linking solar-rich deserts in Rajasthan,[116] and wind corridors in Gujarat,[117] and Tamil Nadu with booming cities and industrial hubs.[118] Alongside this, smart technologies including AI-driven grid management, real-time sensors, and digital meters—must be deployed nationwide. The goal moves from efficiency to empowerment. Imagine a village solar grid selling surplus to the national system, or a neighborhood in Delhi trading its rooftop solar power with the next town. With protocols for net-metering and platforms for energy trading, the Supergrid would give every producer—from households to campuses—the chance to share in India's energy future.

Policy and Market Mechanisms

Technology alone won't deliver change. We need regulations and markets that invite everyone to participate. This means rewriting regulations so communities, startups, and even schools can run their own micro-grids and connect to the bigger system. Picture an app where a university sells afternoon solar surplus directly to a nearby factory. Policies like time-of-use pricing, regulatory sandboxes for peer-to-peer trading, and community storage solutions—battery banks, EVs, or neighborhood-scale systems—can make this possible. Over time, regulators can fold these projects into mainstream distribution. An India Supergrid could go above selling utilities to consumers; it could create a marketplace where everyone is able to generate, trade, and utilize clean energy.

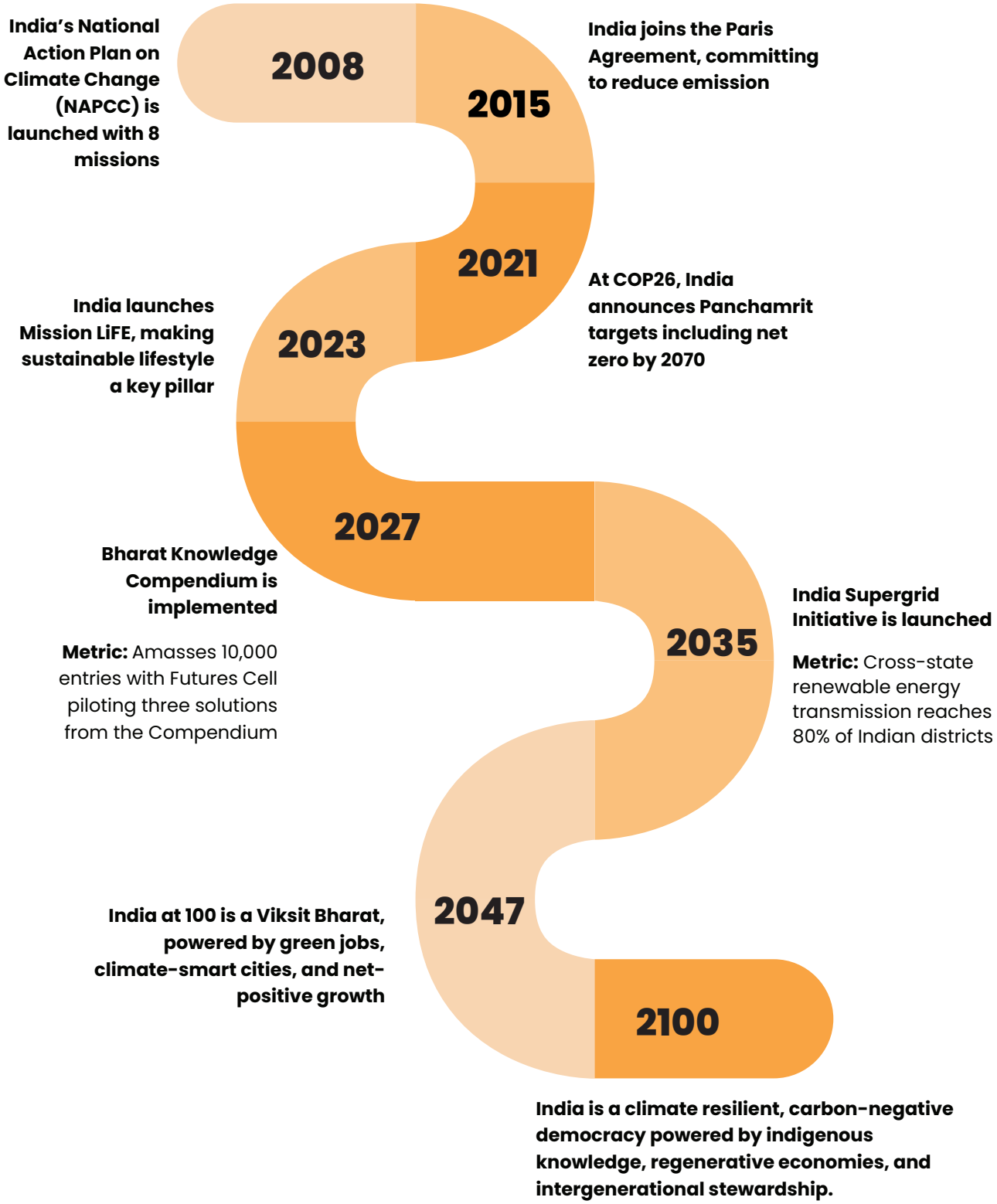
Community Micro-grids and Inclusion

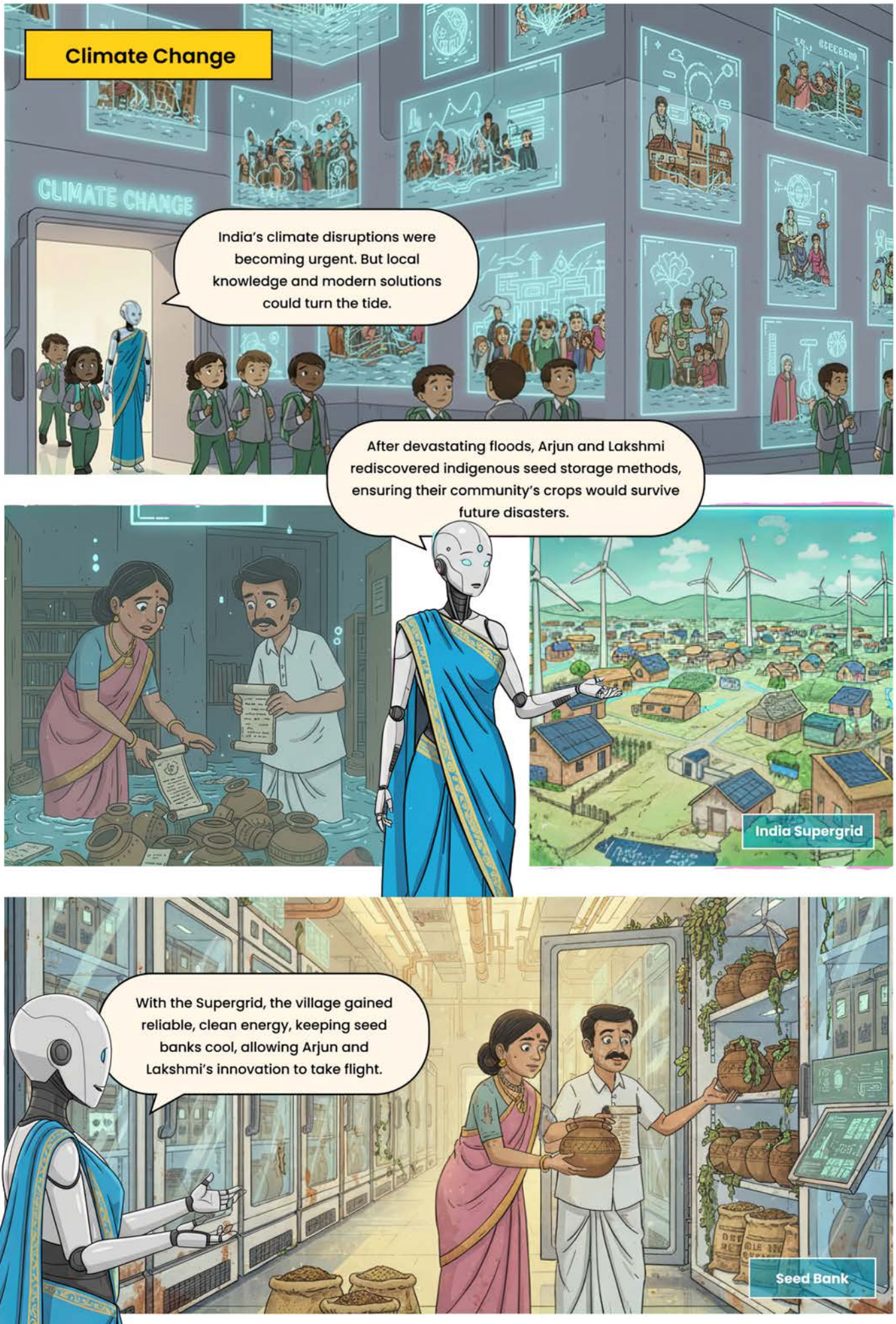
The Supergrid must also reach the last mile. Remote islands, hilly villages, and vulnerable regions deserve reliable, clean power—not dependence on diesel or weak connections. Locally tailored micro-grids—solar, wind, small hydro, or biomass—run by young entrepreneurs, or cooperatives, can deliver this. These micro-grids could plug into the national system when it suits, or function independently during outages. This creates resilience and opportunity. A town could draw from its solar-hydro hybrid in winter, and feed into the grid when demand for energy surges elsewhere. Communities could form solar cooperatives, pooling resources and distributing revenues. With supportive policies along with viability gap funding, energy access could become a vehicle for both equity and entrepreneurship.

What It Takes

We know this won't be easy. Transforming India's grid will take investment in the hundreds of billions over decades. But much of this can build on what's already planned, if channeled smartly. Ministries of Power and Renewable Energy could lead together, with agencies, state utilities, and regulators aligned. New laws must unlock micro-grid sales and peer-to-peer energy trading. Financing can come from climate funds, or even a "Green Grid Accelerator" backed by global banks. India could also

draw lessons from decentralized energy models in countries like Kenya,[119] where mini-grids have expanded rural access, and Indonesia,[120] where micro-hydro power implementation has strengthened off-grid communities. The rollout can start small before scaling nationwide. Resistance from traditional utilities is real, but business models can change: from sole sellers to platform providers. If India pulls this off, it won't just hit climate goals—it will set a global standard for inclusive growth. By its centenary, India could proudly offer its people the greatest gift: clean and reliable energy for all.

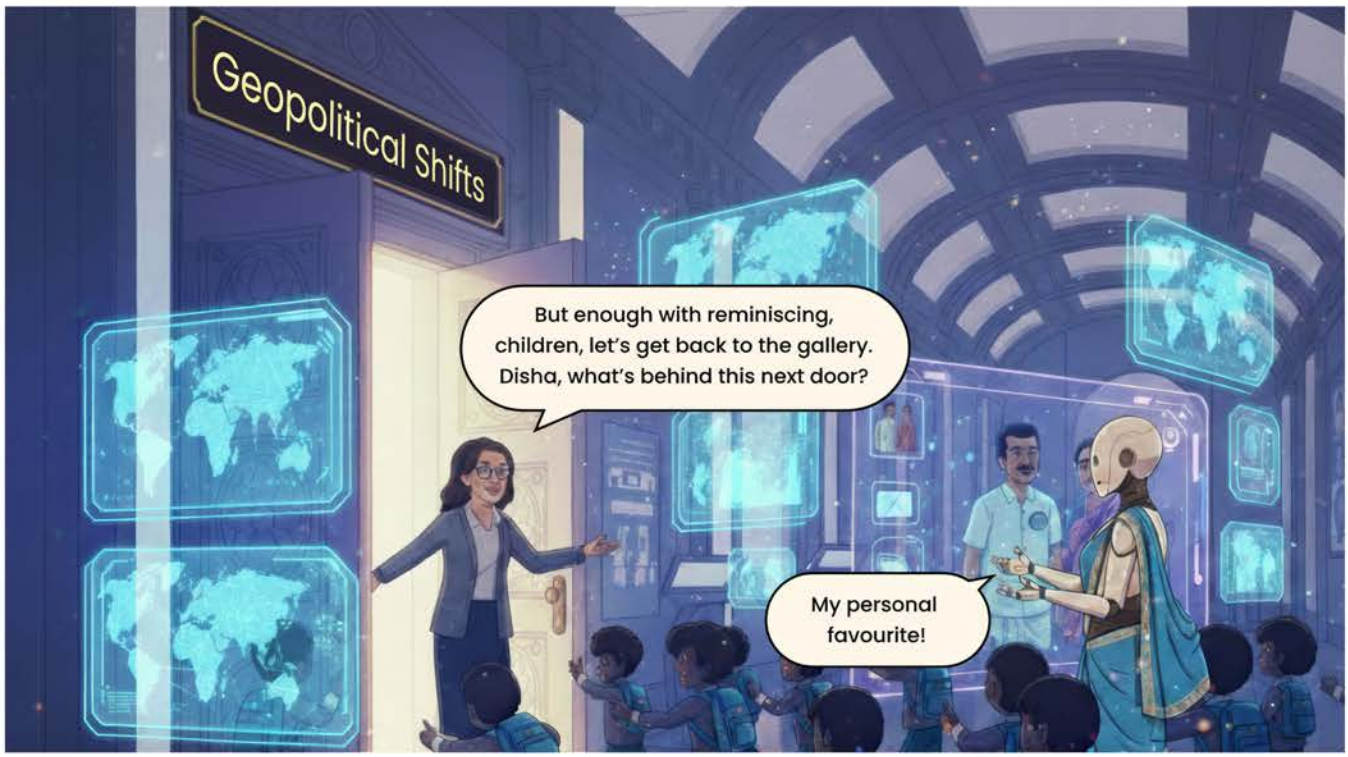



Climate Change
CLIMATE CHANGE
India's climate disruptions were becoming urgent. But local knowledge and modern solutions could turn the tide.
After devastating floods, Arjun and Lakshmi rediscovered indigenous seed storage methods, ensuring their community's crops would survive future disasters.
India Supergrid
With the Supergrid, the village gained reliable, clean energy, keeping seed banks cool, allowing Arjun and Lakshmi's innovation to take flight.
Seed Bank


Mission LiFE
Mission LiFE
Arjun and Lakshmi wanted to help other Indians come up with their own solutions. So, they became Youth Ambassadors, teaching climate-smart practices to all generations.
Wow!
Whoa!


Mission LiFE
Youth Ambassador


Ah, yes! I was a Mission LiFE Youth Ambassador once, too. It was my small part in helping India become *Viksit*.
School Teacher


Geopolitical Shifts
But enough with reminiscing, children, let's get back to the gallery. Disha, what's behind this next door?
My personal favourite!

Geopolitical Shifts

Reimagining the future of global cooperation

The global order is being reshaped before our eyes. Traditional institutions are struggling with legitimacy and delivery, while new power centers rise. As one of the world's largest and youngest democracies, India is stepping into a bigger leadership role, from calling for reforms in multilateral bodies to shaping agendas at the G20.[121] But true leadership isn't only about governments; it's about people. And with half the world under 30 and 80% of all young people projected to live in Asia or Africa by 2100,[122] global cooperation that sidelines their voices is bound to falter.

> *"The Global South has historically been marginalized. We haven't had the same kind of influence or the same kind of voice that the Global North has enjoyed. But now, the time is ripe to change this."*
>
> **Abhishek, an Indian masters student in the European Union**

For young people, today's geopolitical shifts are not abstract. Economic dependencies,[123] trade dynamics,[124] and tightening migration policies cut off opportunities to learn and work abroad. Global knowledge and innovation are still concentrated in the North, leaving the South underrepresented.[125] New frontiers such as cybersecurity, AI, space, and health security urgently need fresh governance frameworks—areas where young, tech-savvy nations like India can bring vision and solutions.

We believe India can help shape a fairer world order by championing youth as the bridge across countries and cultures. Imagine South-South cooperation led not just by diplomats but by young entrepreneurs, activists, and innovators. Picture global institutions infused with the creativity and urgency of the next generation, enabling them to be more responsive to the challenges of our century. This is how we see a future where India's leadership means lifting up the voices of a generation that will inherit the future.

Geopolitical Shifts

To centre young people at the heart of global decision making

Quick Win: Launch a Global South Young Leaders Fellowship, deepening South–South ties through exchanges in innovation, diplomacy, and entrepreneurship.

Moonshot: Institutionalize a Young India Secretariat, embedding youth delegates in every major international forum—from the UN to the G20—so Indian diplomacy permanently reflects the voices of future generations.

Quick Win

Global South Young Leaders Fellowship–Fostering South-South Cooperation through Youth Exchanges

Objective: We propose launching a Global South Young Leaders Fellowship—a flagship program that connects India's youth with peers from Africa, Latin America, South Asia, and Southeast Asia. The idea is simple but powerful: two-way exchanges that build a network of next-generation leaders committed to shared development, diplomacy, and lifelong ties across continents.

India's tradition of South-South cooperation runs deep. Generations of students have crossed borders through ICCR scholarships or diaspora programs like "Know India."[126] India also signed multiple bilateral youth exchange programs with countries including Japan and Poland.[127] But with Africa's youthful population booming, Latin America's experiments in social frameworks, and Asia's rapid transformation, there's a new urgency to nurture these connections. Instead of one-off exchanges, we need a bold fellowship that creates a community of leaders who think, work, and solve problems together.

> *"There are so many countries in the Global South that can learn from each other, especially when it comes to the different ways in which we grapple with our kind of problems that are so unique. There is a lot of scope for cultural interaction between these places as well."*
>
> **Arjun, an Indian international relations student in the United Kingdom.**



A young changemaker shares how Varanasi centered its heritage during India's G20 Presidency

Action Plan

As proposing implementing the Global South Fellowship with these key elements:

A Three-Stage Fellowship Structure

Stage 1: University Capstones. Final-year students from India and partner countries collaborate on research projects. They spend semesters at each other's universities or in the field, learning across cultures and problem-solving for shared challenges.

Stage 2: Residencies for Early-Career Professionals. Social entrepreneurs, junior diplomats, city planners, or innovators spend 3–6 months in partner countries. An Indian planner may help with a Kigali metrobus project, while a Nigerian health-tech founder refines operation strategies in Bengaluru. These residencies prioritize practical problem-solving and cross-pollination of ideas.

Stage 3: Collaborative Labs for Mid-Career Experts. Rising leaders form multi-country teams to co-design policies or prototypes. Imagine a lab on climate-smart agriculture pairing an IIT researcher with a Kenyan policymaker and an Argentinian agronomist. These labs offer real solutions that countries could adopt.

Institutional Consortium and Support

The fellowship would be co-managed by a consortium of universities, think tanks, and government bodies. India's MEA could anchor the initiative, with organizations like CEEW, the UN Foundation, the African Union Youth Division, and the ASEAN University Network bringing co-ownership. Funding could be blended: development partnership budgets, philanthropic foundations, and private sponsors interested in supporting talent linkages.

Alumni Network

Every fellowship experience must leave a mark—a published paper, a prototype, or a policy proposal presented at forums like the G20 or BRICS. Alumni would be connected through reunions, seed funding, and digital platforms. By 2047, many will hold leadership roles—and their first instinct in global negotiations will be to turn to a familiar peer from their fellowship days. This trust transforms international relations into personal, durable bonds.

What It Takes

Implementation requires vision in partnership with the Ministry of External Affairs. We recommend starting with pilot countries before scaling. Funding can be pooled into a dedicated Global South Fellowship Fund, with international cooperatives and private endowments joining in. To ensure mutual ownership, the fellowship could be built in collaboration with partner countries. This may take the form of bilateral or multilateral MoUs with governments, and universities across countries. Success could be measured by the networks built and alumni rising to leadership.

By implementing this fellowship, India positions itself as a convener and mentor of young global talent. More than diplomacy, it's about investing in a generation ready to lead together, proving that South-South cooperation isn't aspirational, it's transformational.

Moonshot

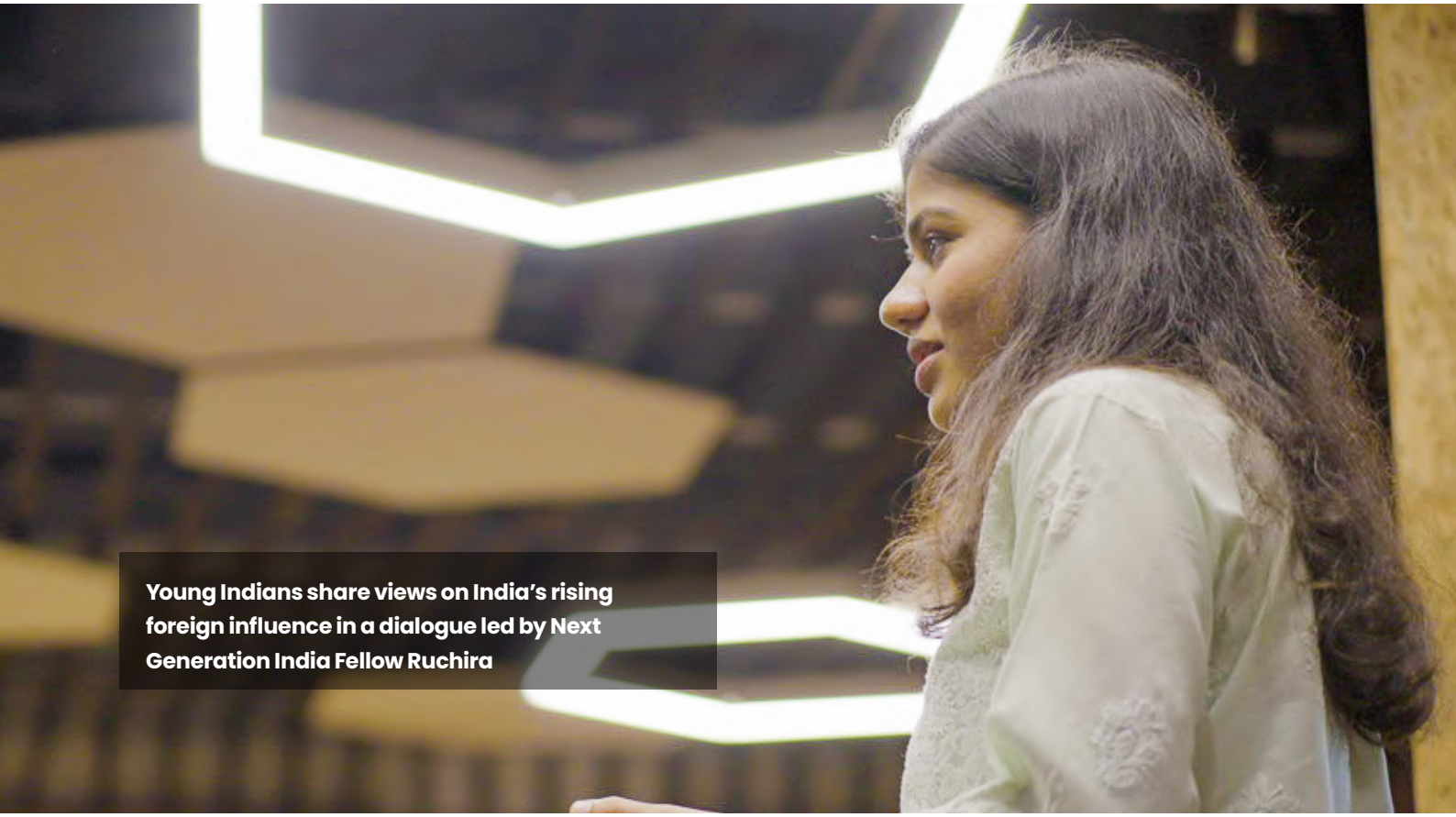
Young India Secretariat in Global Governance–Institutionalizing Youth Participation in International Affairs

Objective: A Young India Secretariat would ensure youth representatives and advisors are part of India's official delegations and diplomatic work at major global forums like the UN, G20, and BRICS. This would guarantee that the outlook of young people, both from India and worldwide, are directly included in shaping international positions, while also facilitating Indian youth as bridges for global cooperation.

The time has come to make youth inclusion in diplomacy standard practice. Other countries have already shown what is possible: Germany, Mexico, Australia, Sri Lanka, and others have created UN Youth Delegate programs,[128] where young representatives join national delegations, carry out consultations, and bring youth voices into global discussions.

India, through its vast and dynamic youth population, has an unparalleled opportunity to lead. During India's 2023 G20 Presidency, the Y20 engagement group demonstrated this capability by producing a youth communiqué that called for institutionalizing youth representatives for future generations.[129] We believe it's time to go further—creating a standing Secretariat that coordinates and sustains youth participation and representation across all global platforms where India has a role.

> *"In an ideal world, you have the whole system moving towards fair and future informed policies."*
>
> **Nudhara Yusuf, Co-Chair, Coalition for the UN We Need**



Young Indians share views on India's rising foreign influence in a dialogue led by Next Generation India Fellow Ruchira

Action Plan

Develop the Young India Secretariat with these features:

Formal Youth Delegate Program

We propose starting with the UN, where a group of annually selected Youth Delegates would formally join India's official delegation at the General Assembly and other summits. These delegates, aged roughly 21–30, would be chosen through a rigorous national process led by the Ministry of Youth Affairs in collaboration with the Ministry of External Affairs. Once selected, these delegates would be trained in diplomacy and given clear roles: delivering youth statements in UN debates, engaging with other countries in side events, and reporting back to young Indians on what happened at the UN. For other global forums—from COP climate conferences to WTO ministerials—India's delegations should also include youth observers or advisors. Just as the U.S. has a Youth Observer to the UN, India could appoint official youth envoys across key forums.

Institutional Base and Network

The Secretariat should be anchored by a partnership between the Ministry of External Affairs and the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. It would be staffed by young professionals mentored by senior diplomats, creating an intergenerational team. A core role of the Secretariat would be to maintain and grow a national network of Indian youth engaged in international relations from UN volunteers to young scientists. This network could provide fast, informed inputs to India's negotiating teams. For instance, if India is shaping a position on digital governance frameworks, the Secretariat could crowdsource insights from young tech experts across its network, ensuring policy reflects the perspective of the generation most impacted.

Policy Integration and Legacy

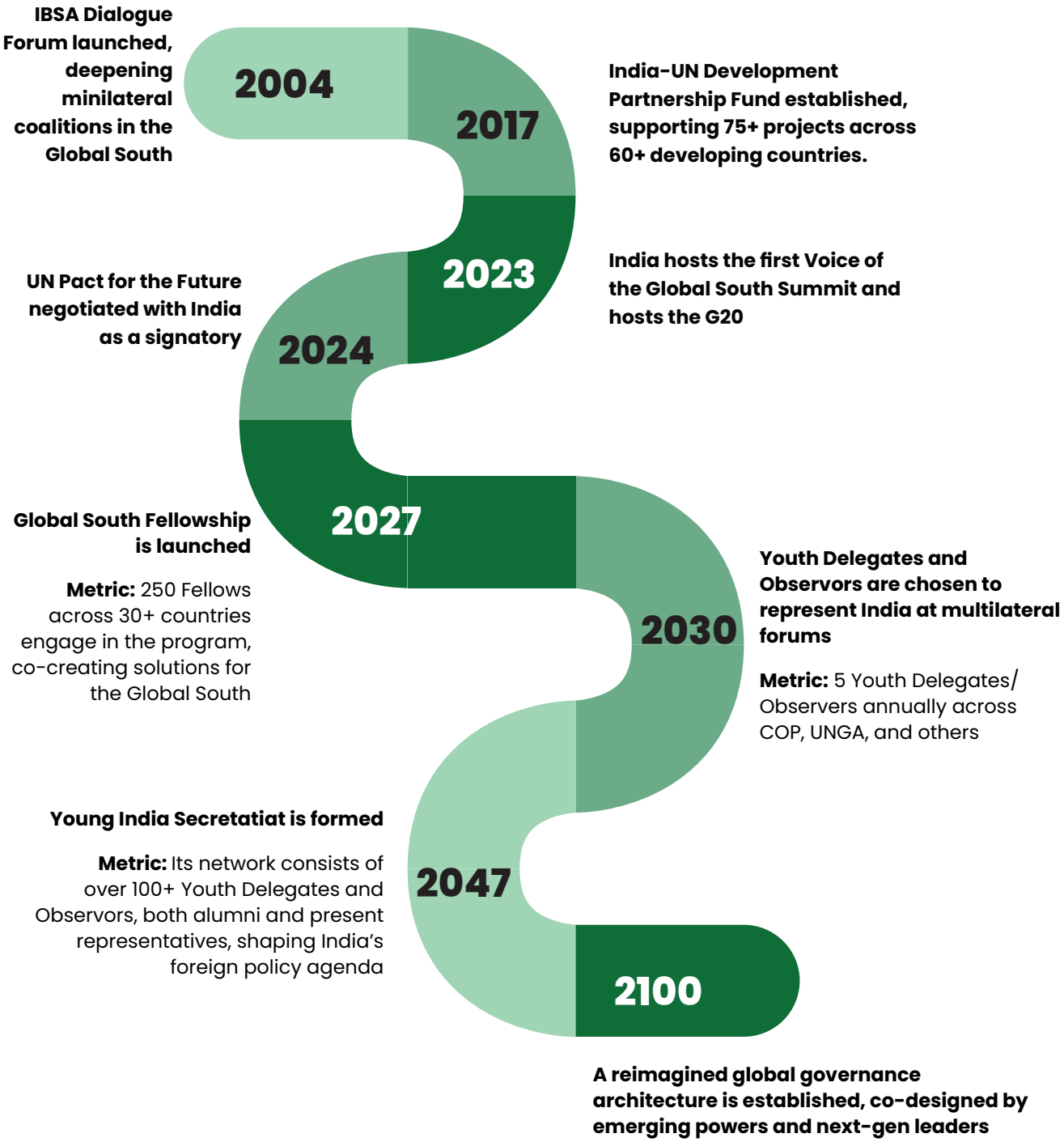
The Secretariat will help ensure youth voices shape policy. After every major UN session, Youth Delegates could present their findings to the External Affairs Minister and even to Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee. At COPs, if youth observers propose bold ideas for climate adaptation, the Environment Ministry could feed these into India's climate strategy. This would normalize bringing long-term perspectives into negotiations, as youth delegates naturally prioritize future generations. The program would also serve as a pipeline to groom young Indians in international affairs, with alumni moving into mainstream diplomatic roles and promoting intergenerational collaboration in foreign policy.

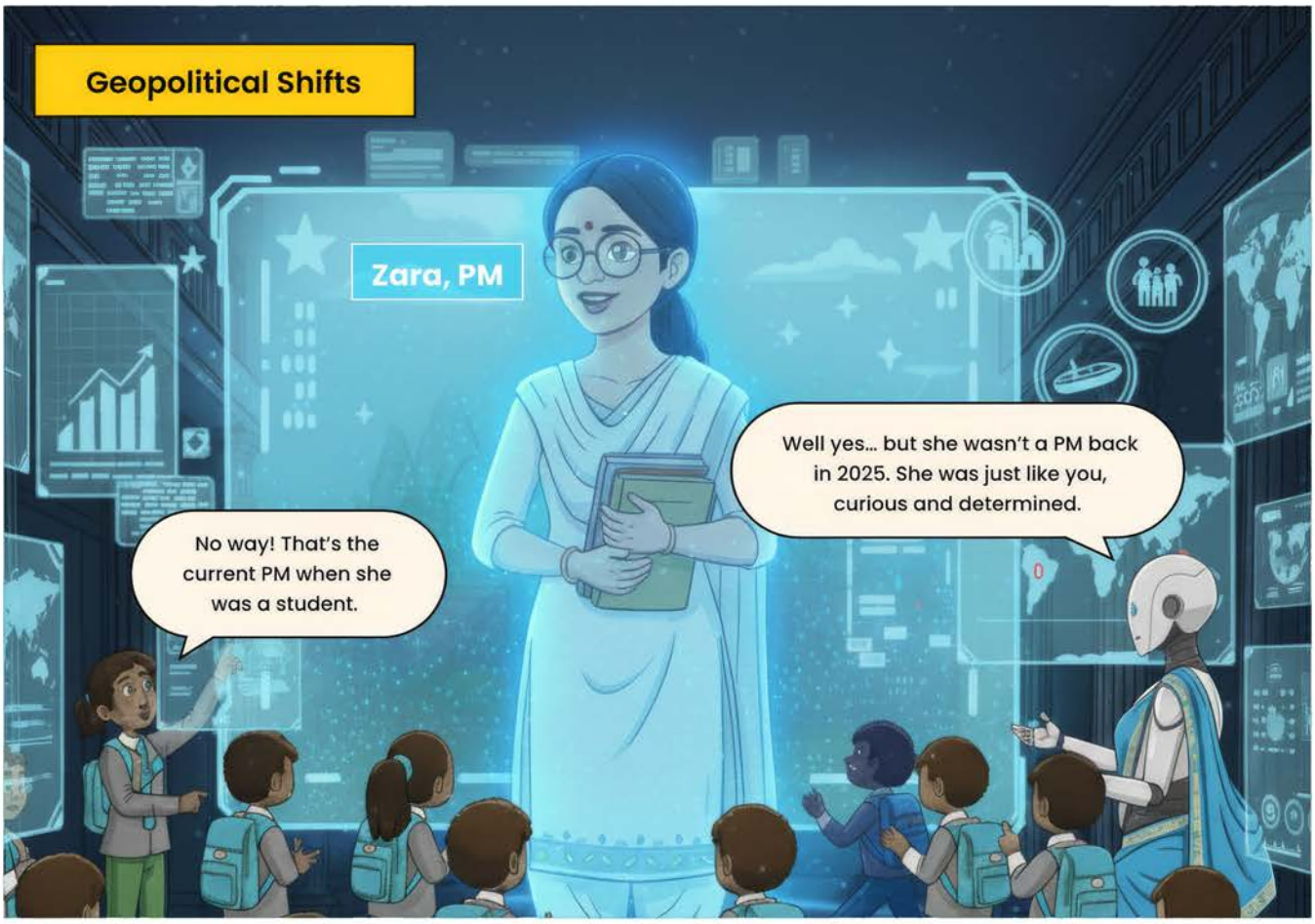
What It Takes

The Young India Secretariat requires both political will and practical systems. The government must commit to youth as legitimate actors in foreign policy. Early concerns about experience or discipline can be tackled with clear selection criteria, training, and coordination protocols. Youth delegates would function as part of the delegation team, under the leadership of the head of delegation, with speaking slots in appropriate forums. The Ministry of Youth Affairs can align the Secretariat with the National Youth Policy, giving it bureaucratic backing. Costs would be modest—covering travel, a small Secretariat office, and training workshops—while the returns in human capital and global credibility would be immense.

Coordination with international institutions is feasible, as the UN already encourages youth delegates. India could also push within the G20 to formalize youth representation, ensuring Y20 recommendations flow directly into G20 outcomes. Over time, if India secures a permanent United Nations Security Council (UNSC) seat, a youth advisor sitting behind the Ambassador's chair would symbolize India's intergenerational leadership. The key will be continuity: embedding the Secretariat in long-term policy frameworks so it survives political transitions.

When future historians look back at innovations in diplomacy, India's Young India Secretariat could stand alongside peacekeeping as a proud national contribution—one that redefined international relations to be more inclusive, forward-looking, and just.




Geopolitical Shifts
Zara, PM
No way! That's the current PM when she was a student.
Well yes... but she wasn't a PM back in 2025. She was just like you, curious and determined.


GLOBAL SOUTH
FELLOWSHIP
Zara attended her first Global South Fellowship in Nairobi. She learned how countries of the Global South could unite, share knowledge, and solve problems.


She realized that young people could be the bridge between nations, creating solutions together.


Young India Secretariat
Back home, Zara helped launch the Young India Secretariat, giving young people a platform to shape foreign policy.
UNGA 102
Through the Secretariat, young Indians were embedded in official delegations, lending their voices and perspectives in shaping policy.
So, young people really shaped India's role in the world?
Exactly. And the story continues with each of you...

Enabling a Future-Ready India

Catalysts for *Viksit Bharat* 2047

As India strides towards ***Viksit Bharat*@2047**, we recognise that utilizing the five global disrupters for good will require bold sectoral reforms as well as new institutional catalysts. They demand governance that is anticipatory, inclusive, and youth-engaged.

In the spirit of working with and for young people for a better future, we propose three transformative enablers to future-proof India's development journey:

- **A Ministry of Future Affairs** to embed long-range foresight in policy;
- **A Youth Advisory Council to the Prime Minister** to hardwire youth voices into highest-level decision-making; and
- **A Mission LiFE Youth Ambassador Programme** to mobilise young Indians as change agents for sustainable lifestyles.

These three catalysts form a triad of institutional innovations that could unlock the full potential of India's youth and ensure our nation is prepared for the future. They are ambitious but achievable with the right mix of investment and empowerment of young changemakers. Each reinforces the other: with a Ministry looking to the future, a Council bringing youth to the table, and youth leaders galvanising communities, the whole becomes greater than the sum of its parts.

By enacting these enablers, India would cement young people as co-creators of Vision 2047. It would demonstrate that India is future-ready. And it would show the world a model of how a large, diverse nation can transform itself from within, harnessing the idealism and ideas of youth to steer the ship of state through disruptive waters. This is our collective call to action–a call we hope will resonate from the halls of Parliament to the classrooms of our villages. The journey to *Viksit Bharat* has room for every generation; our recommendation is to make sure the youngest generation is helping chart the course.

> *"If you want a systemic way of institutionalizing futures, SOIF's Foresight Governance Prism is anchored on three points: political leaders, institutions/organizations, and citizens."*[130]
>
> **Claudette Salinas Leyva, Long-term Governance Coordinator at the School of International Futures**

Ministry of Future Affairs

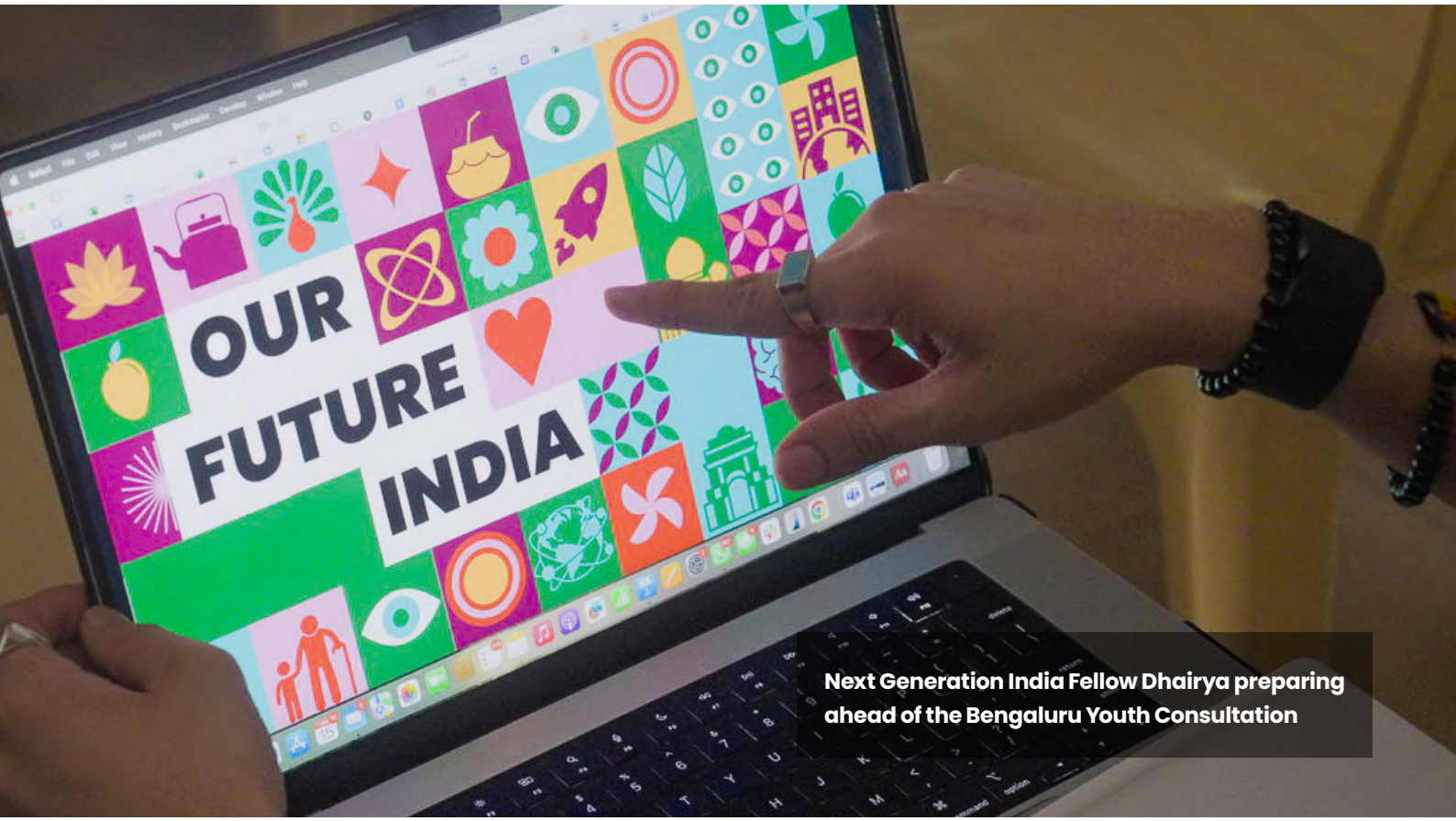
Envisioning Future-Ready Governance

In 2024, the UN *Declaration on Future Generations* sounded the alarm that complex, interrelated challenges "if left unaddressed, will compound harm to future generations," and that many such risks are "now more foreseeable than in the past".[131] The preceding chapters have detailed structural recommendations to tackle today's disruptions based on current trends. Yet, given the nonlinear and accelerated characteristics of these disruptions, siloed, short-term interventions are not enough.[132] Combating such compounding crises requires *disruptive thinking*. We need to institutionalise **futures thinking:** systematically exploring multiple scenarios and acting toward desirable outcomes–the creation of a Ministry of Future Affairs is a bold step to make anticipation and intergenerational fairness an everyday part of how India governs. By embedding futures thinking into our institutions, India would be better positioned to navigate a world in flux , safeguarding the rights of future generations while addressing present needs.

Building on India's Foresight Foundations

India is steadily laying the groundwork for institutionalised foresight. A prominent example is the creation of NITI Aayog in 2015 to replace the 65-year-old Planning Commission–a recognition that five-year plans were too short-sighted for India's evolving developmental needs. As the Prime Minister said then, India needed *"a new body, a new soul, a new thinking, a new direction […] to lead the country based on creative thinking".*[133]

Since then, NITI Aayog has been charged with envisioning *Viksit Bharat*@2047 and has released multi-decade roadmaps for India's development. Under this vision, many ministries have produced long-term strategy



Next Generation India Fellow Dhairya preparing ahead of the Bengaluru Youth Consultation



Next Generation India Fellow Prachi leading a conversation with students in Bhubaneswar

documents–from the **Health Ministry's Public Health Surveillance Vision 2030**,[134] to the **Technology Vision 2035** by TIFAC under DST.[135] Several states are following suit: Tamil Nadu charted a path to a $4.2 trillion economy by 2047,[136] Uttar Pradesh is preparing a Vision@2047 focused on its cities,[137] and Gujarat's blueprint for *Viksit Bharat* is a "living document" regularly revised.[138] Notably, Maharashtra in 2023 introduced a pioneering Future Generations Bill,[139] inspired by Wales' globally trailblazing *Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015*.[140] That bill–one of the first serious attempts in a large democracy to legislate long-termism–would mandate the state government to consider the long-term impact of its decisions and create an independent Commissioner for Future Generations. Such developments show a growing appetite in India for futures-oriented governance.

> *"The passing of this Bill [Future Generations Bill] will be historic for India and Maharashtra."*
>
> **Chaitanya Marpakwar, journalist at The Times of India**

Yet, vision documents and pilot initiatives, while a good start, are not truly anticipatory; they routinely assume linear progress and are unable to account for cross-sectoral disruptions (for example, how climate volatility might reshape health outcomes or in what ways AI could upend labor markets). The next step is to transition from isolated foresight exercises to a permanent, integrated mechanism that scans the horizon and acts across silos.

To that end, we propose establishing the **Ministry of Future Affairs**–a dedicated body at the national level to champion long-range planning, and integrated governance. It would continuously anticipate the cross-cutting impacts of current and future global disruptions. Crucially, MoFA would enable policymakers to anticipate, prepare for, and even prevent crises–using futures tools such as scenario mapping and strategic foresight–. By institutionalizing horizon-scanning and "future-proofing" across government, MoFA keeps India a step ahead of disruptions that could otherwise snowball.

MoFA would also create an enabling ecosystem to **scale up innovation pilots** that address these disruptions. India boasts a vibrant hub of startups, social enterprises, and pilot projects tackling problems from climate-smart agriculture to AI-driven skilling. Yet too often, promising solutions remain stuck at pilot stage and are unable to scale nationally.[141] The proposed MoFA would embed innovation into mission-mode projects. It would launch **time-bound, goal-driven missions** (6–24 months) on pressing issues, with dedicated budgets and clear targets, and crucially include "sunset clauses" and handover protocols. Successful missions would then be handed off to line ministries for expansion, ensuring localized innovations translate to large-scale impact. Such an approach combines agility with institutional backing, so that a clever solution piloted in one district can swiftly become a national program.

Finally, MoFA answers the need for **thought leadership from the Global South on long-term governance**. Until now, the futures discourse has been dominated by frameworks from advanced economies (the Wales Act being a prime example).[142] While valuable, those models do not fully reflect the realities of countries like India that must pursue development amid disruption. India's own G20 Presidency in 2023 proved our ability to inject a long-term, inclusive perspective–championing digital public goods and reforming MDB for future resilience.[143] Echoing the UN call for member states to adopt future-oriented governance,[144] India has the chance to demonstrate how a populous, developing democracy can **institutionalise future-readiness**. By creating MoFA, India will not only plan for its centenary milestones but will help shape a century where the interests of future generations are a priority of the government today.



In New York, Next Generation India Fellow Gunraagh convenes young Indians for a Diaspora Dialogue at the UN Foundation offices

What MoFA Would Look Like – From Vision to Action

Under MoFA's umbrella, several game-changing initiatives can lead the way to 2047:

Next Generation Impact Assessments

MoFA could champion the expansion of impact assessments (like we do for the environment) to include well-being of future generations. A publicly available framework for generational justice, such as that developed by Portugal's Gulbenkian Foundation, could guide this.[145] Assessing policies for future fairness could then become as routine as budgeting, instilling accountability to youth and future generations in every major decision.

Futures Literacy in Policy

MoFA will champion the use of cutting-edge foresight tools in governance. From incorporating AI-driven trend analysis in planning, to running simulations of "what if" scenarios for major legislation, MoFA mainstreams futures literacy among officials. By training civil servants and exposing them to scenario exercises, it cultivates a forward-looking bureaucratic mindset. India's policies would then increasingly be stress-tested against future scenarios, making them more robust and innovative. With MoFA embedding tools like horizon scanning and scenario mapping into government workflows, India can proactively navigate disruptions that would otherwise blindside us.

Flagship Foresight Outputs

The ministry could commission an ongoing series of futures outlooks, for example, *"Hard hitting scenarios for India@2047"* across domains like AI, mobility, healthcare, energy, and democracy, to inform government strategy. Such publications, akin to defense white papers or economic surveys, would keep the public discourse aligned with long term goals and encourage all ministries to broaden their time horizons. Notably, NITI Aayog's India@2047 exercise has already whetted appetites for such cross-cutting foresight.[146]

Global South Foresight Coalition

MoFA could initiate knowledge-exchange with other developing nations, sharing tools and models for anticipatory governance. India could host a *Global Futures Forum* and partner with UNDP, OECD or the African Union to develop training toolkits, much as Wales' Commissioner engaged Maharashtra lawmakers.[147] In doing so, MoFA amplifies India's leadership role–positioning us not just as a "workshop of the world" but also as a "workshop of future governance."

Towards a Bharat 2100 Act

In the long run, MoFA would lay the groundwork for a **Bharat 2100 Act**–a landmark law to embed futures thinking into India's governance DNA. Like the Wales' Act, a Bharat 2100 Act could require governments to account for the well-being of future citizens in all policies and budgets, with MoFA serving as the enforcing authority and ombudsman. Enacting this by, say, India's centenary in 2047 would be a fitting culmination of our commitment to the next 100 years.

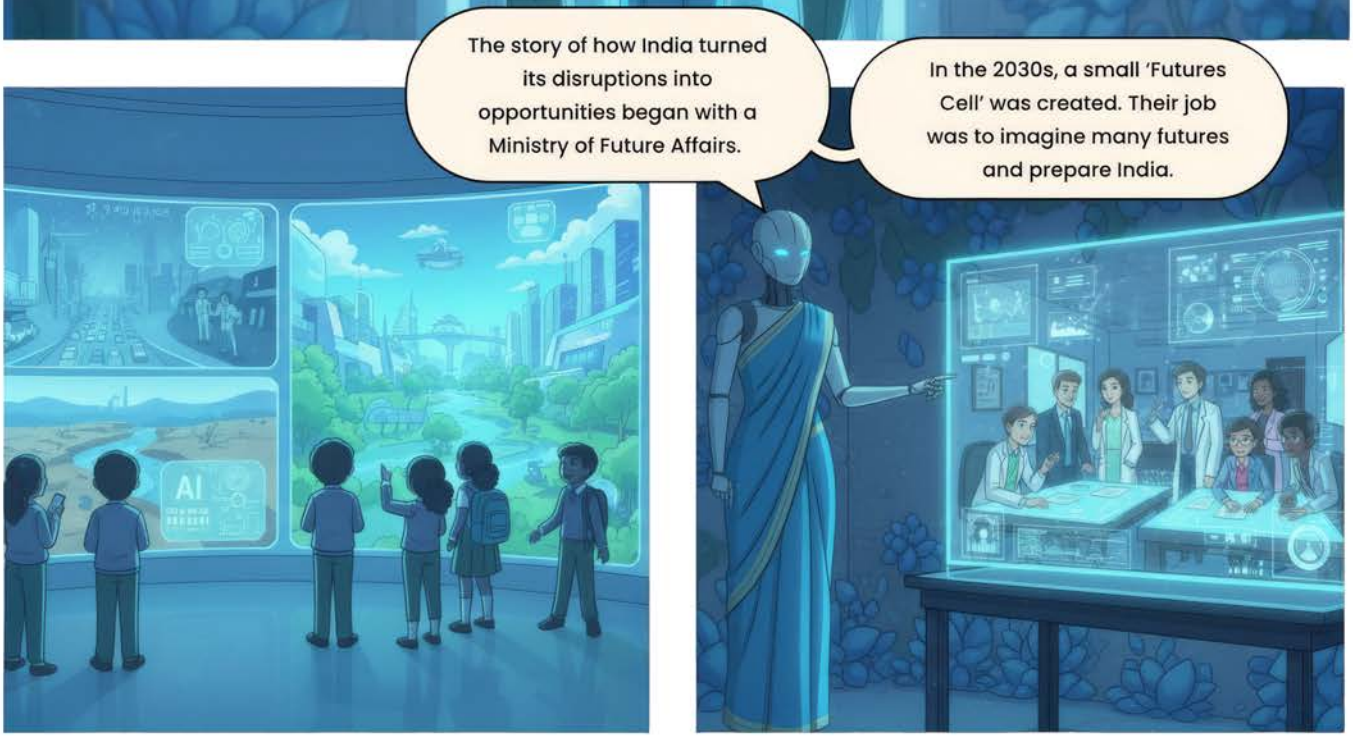
In summary, a mission-oriented **Ministry of Future Affairs** would ensure that India's development over the next 25 years is guided by a coherent long-term vision. It centers on the belief that planning for the next generation must start now, in this generation. By 2047, MoFA's impact could be transformative–India having weathered disruptions and leaped ahead in multiple domains because we had the foresight to plan, the agility to innovate, and the solidarity to include every voice, especially the youth, in shaping our country. We see MoFA as the institutional bridge to make the bold ideas of this report a reality, safeguarding a prosperous, and equitable India for decades to come.



Next Generation India Fellow Radhika capturing the rich cultural heritage of Odisha, India in her art book

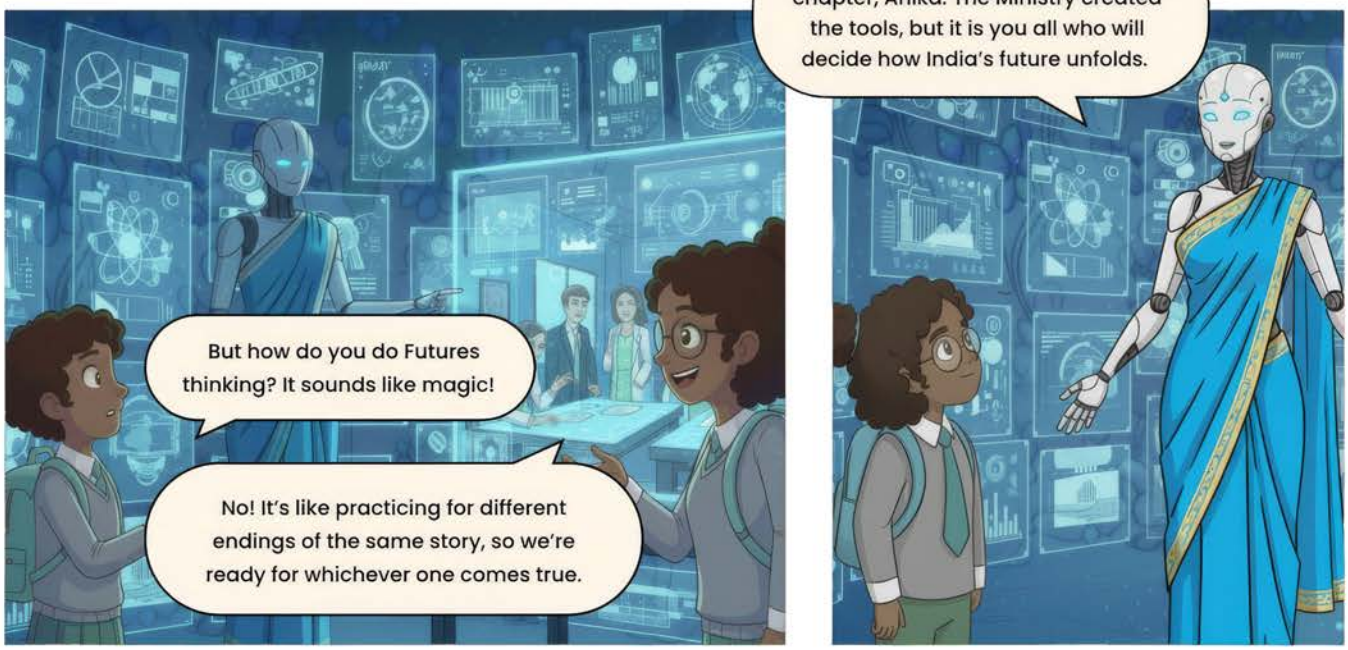

Ministry of Future Affairs
MINISTRY OF FUTURE AFFAIRS
Wait... is that... real?


This is the last room of the museum. It's where imagination became institution.


The story of how India turned its disruptions into opportunities began with a Ministry of Future Affairs.
In the 2030s, a small 'Futures Cell' was created. Their job was to imagine many futures and prepare India.
AI


The Futures Cell did all this?
Yes! Futures thinking turned possibilities into plans.
Like future detectives!


The Futures Cell's work grew so important that it became the Ministry of Future Affairs. With two arms, one for coordination, the other to implement policies.
Like a brain with two sides!


But how do you do Futures thinking? It sounds like magic!
No! It's like practicing for different endings of the same story, so we're ready for whichever one comes true.
Every generation adds a new chapter, Anika. The Ministry created the tools, but it is you all who will decide how India's future unfolds.

Youth Advisory Council to the Prime Minister

Bridging Generations at the Pinnacle of Policy

Over the past decade, India has consulted young people on numerous policies that impact their future. The formulation of the National Education Policy, for instance, involved inputs from youth and students.[148] India's Voluntary National Review on the SDGs included dedicated consultations with children and youth.[149] The Prime Minister himself has voiced an ambition to engage **100,000 youth in public affairs**.[150]

Structures for youth engagement do exist, notably a **National Youth Advisory Council** under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports,[151] but these are relatively limited in mandate and reach. As India accelerates towards its *Viksit Bharat* goals, the time is ripe to institutionalise youth participation at the highest level of government.

Countries worldwide are experimenting with formal avenues for youth input. Every municipality in Finland is required by law to have a Youth Council or equivalent body for young people's representation.[152]

Rwanda's robust National Youth Council feeds youth perspectives into national development planning.[153] Building on India's progress and these global lessons, we propose a **Youth Advisory Council to the Prime Minister**: a permanent, empowered body to channel the insights of India's young generation directly into the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

The Path Ahead–From Forums to Formal Voice

India's initiatives like the *Viksit Bharat* Youth Parliament,[154] and the Young Leaders Dialogue have energized youth to contribute ideas on nation-building.[155] These forums, alongside ad-hoc consultations, display a growing recognition that young Indians are stakeholders in today's decisions. The natural next step is to move from episodic engagement to a continuous advisory mechanism. A Youth Advisory Council to the PM would reflect this sentiment. It would institutionalise a two-way dialogue between India's youth and its top leadership, ensuring that the vision for 2047 is informed by those who will live the longest with its consequences.



Young leader shares her thoughts on engaging with policy design at the national level



Students in Kochi brainstorming during the Youth Consultation Solution Labs

> *"We understand our generation's challenges better than anyone, and we're ready to help shape the solutions."*
>
> **Manya, Aakanshi, Ananya, and Elvin, young professionals at a think tank**

Conceived akin to the **Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM)**, the Youth Council would serve as a consultative body on emerging issues and generational priorities. Concretely, the Council would:

Provide Direct Policy Insights: It would offer independent, evidence-based advice to the PMO on issues that affect young and future generations such as–the future of work in an AI-driven economy, bridging digital divides, accelerating the energy transition towards green jobs and more. Having a standing council allows the government to get youth perspectives quickly on fast-evolving challenges, circumventing the need to convene large-scale events each time. For instance, if a sudden spike in youth unemployment occurs or a new social media trend raises ethical questions, the PMO could task the Youth Council to analyze it and recommend actions within weeks.

Institutionalise Foresight and Feedback: The Council could meet regularly (say, quarterly) and publish **Youth Advisories or "Youth White Papers"** on topics of national priorities. Much like the EAC-PM releases economic outlooks,[156] the Youth Council could release reports on themes such as *"India's Innovation Decade: Youth Entrepreneurship Roadmap"* or *"Building an Inclusive Digital Economy for Young India."* These advisories would be publicly available, adding transparency while giving a broader youth audience a reference point for policy discourse. They would also act as a feedback loop, conveying which government initiatives are successful on ground and which are not from a youth perspective.

What Will It Take–Structure and Political Will

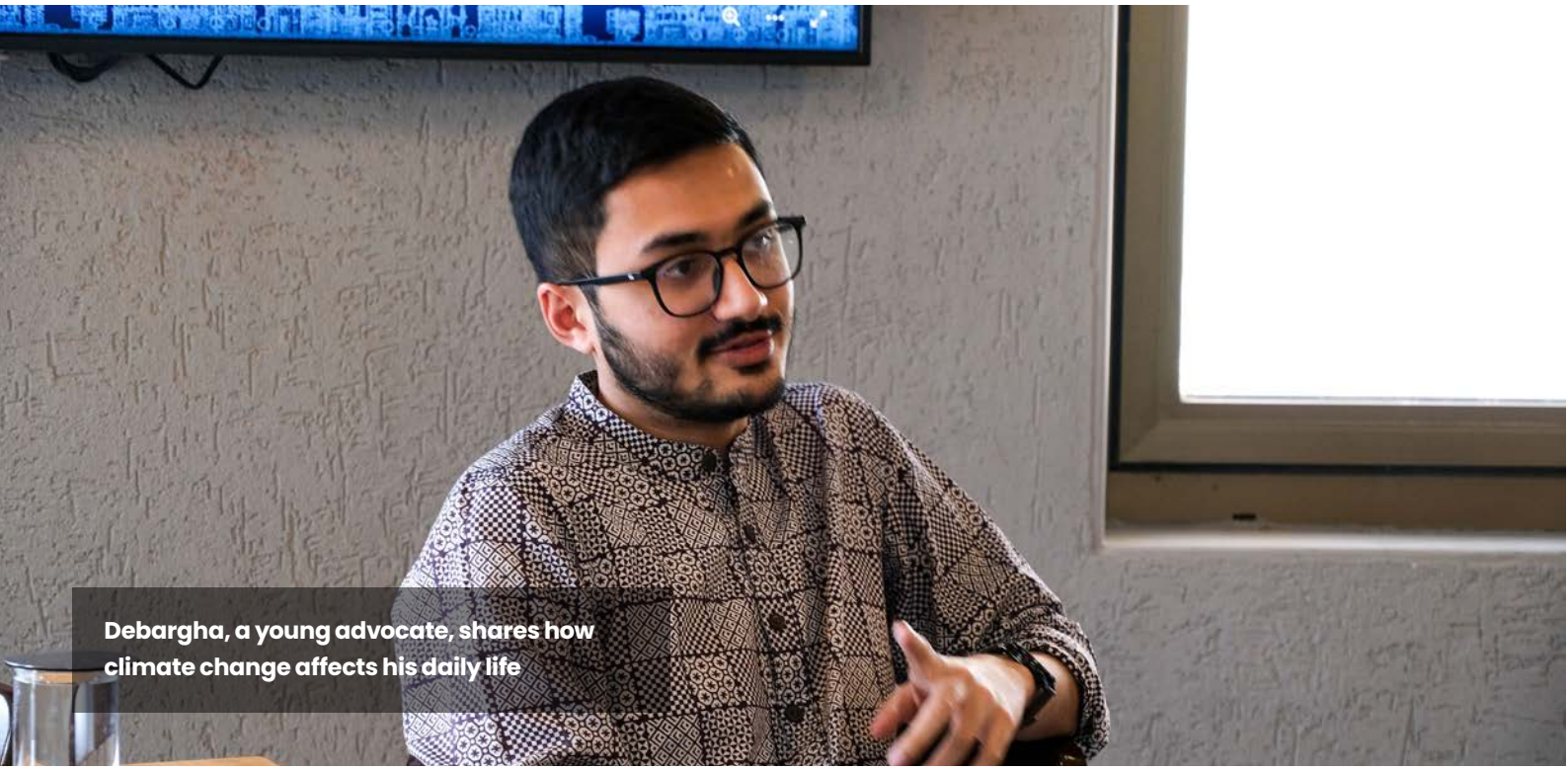
To bring the Youth Advisory Council to life, we envision a model with around **25–30 members**, selected by a transparent and competitive process to ensure diversity of geography, gender, caste, socio-economic background, and expertise. The Council could comprise young achievers and community leaders (18–35 years) from different fields–entrepreneurs, students, activists, artists, scientists–truly representing the mosaic of New India. Each member would serve a **two-year term**. Alumni would form a network of

former members mentoring new Councillors and carrying forward the ethos of youth participation in other areas. Importantly, the Council should be anchored in the **PMO** to provide an official pathway to decision-making. This mirrors global best practice: **Canada's Prime Minister's Youth Council**, for example, is run out of the Canadian PM's office and convenes with the Prime Minister and officials regularly to advise on national issues.[157]

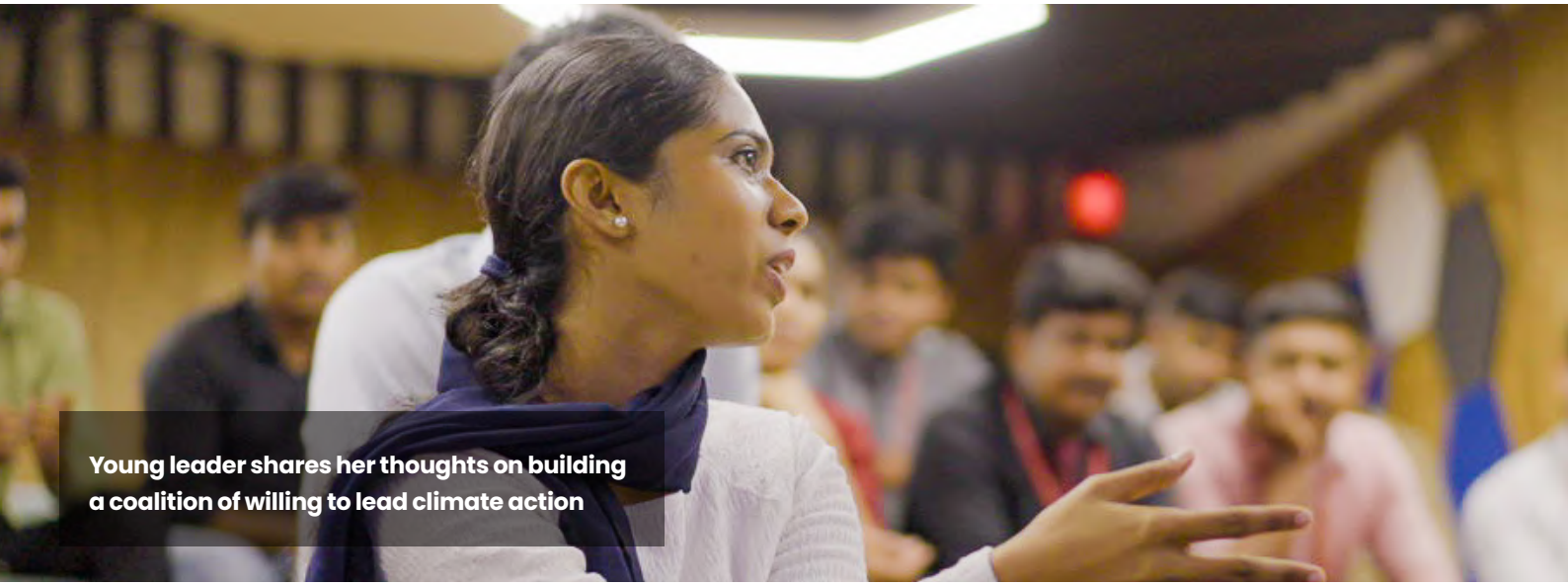
Procedurally, the Youth Council might function similar to the EAC-PM in terms of workflow.[158] It would have a small secretariat to support research and logistics. The Council could be subdivided into task forces aligned with priority themes impacting young people's lives and futures, each producing briefs and recommendations. We propose quarterly meetings where Council members present their findings and insights directly to the PM and relevant ministers. Additionally, the Council's reports would be submitted to the Union Cabinet or NITI Aayog for further consideration, ensuring youth-informed ideas enter the bureaucratic pipeline.

A crucial success factor will be legitimacy and non-partisanship. The selection process would be merit-based and insulated from politics–perhaps involving an eminent jury or an independent panel–so that the Council is viewed as credible by both government and the public. By design, this Council is advisory; it does not usurp any decision-making power, which mitigates any political resistance. The Council provides the PMO a sounding board that keeps policies attuned to the pulse of young India.

If implemented well, by 2047 it could give rise to a dynamic pipeline of young leaders feeding into mainstream leadership. The Youth Advisory Council would have created a cadre of alumni who go on to serve in government, politics, academia, and civil society, all acting as champions of–participatory governance. Even more, it would normalize the inclusion of young changemakers in all major national conversations. India's democracy will be stronger for it.



Debargha, a young advocate, shares how climate change affects his daily life



Young leader shares her thoughts on building a coalition of willing to lead climate action

Mission LiFE Youth Ambassador Programme

Youth at the Forefront of Climate Action

Climate change and environmental sustainability are now daily realities instead of distant concerns. Recognising this, India has been actively involving its young generation in its climate initiatives. During India's G20 Presidency in 2023, the *Youth20 (Y20) Summit* convened young delegates from across the world who unequivocally called for greater youth inclusion in climate governance and action.[159] At home, innovative campaigns have tapped into youth volunteerism–for example, the *Youth for Swachhata* under Swachh Bharat Mission Urban have mobilised young volunteers to champion cleanliness and waste management in cities.[160] In thousands of schools nationwide, Eco-Clubs are fostering environmental responsibility in schools, from tree-planting drives to plastic-free campus initiatives.[161] Building on this momentum, India's flagship **Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment)**–which advocates sustainable everyday behaviors, offers an ideal platform to spur on youth leadership on climate and sustainability. We propose a dedicated **Mission LiFE Youth Ambassador Programme** that empowers young Indians to drive local climate solutions, influence community behaviors, and bridge grassroots action with national climate benchmarks.

From Classrooms to Communities: Mission LiFE focuses on making sustainability a mass movement, encouraging individuals to adopt simple lifestyle tweaks that collectively have a big impact. The **Mission LiFE Youth Ambassadors** could take this mission beyond the classroom eco-clubs into communities and online spaces, making it aspirational for young people to lead climate-friendly lives. The programme could create pathways for youth to become climate champions, each Ambassador catalyzing change in their own circle of influence. Bringing youth into structured methods of climate action with real authority and backing would unleash their leadership.

A **Mission LiFE Youth Ambassador** could serve as a local leader and role model for sustainable lifestyle practices. Each year (or two-year term), a **cohort of Youth Ambassadors** could be selected across all states–for example, 500 exceptional young people aged 15–29 who have shown passion for climate action. These Ambassadors would:

Lead Hyper-Local Campaigns: Every Ambassador would design and implement at least one grassroots campaign complimenting the 7 themes of Mission LiFE (such as energy saving, water conservation, reduced waste, healthy lifestyle, etc.). This could involve organizing neighborhood plastic-free drives, building composting systems in their village, promoting cycling

to school in their town, or running an online pledge drive for responsible consumption. These campaigns are *hyper-local* and as such, are tuned to their community's needs, encouraging others to join, and creating a domino effect on behavior change.

> *"We've seen that when young people are brought into decision-making with intent and support, they don't just participate, they lead."*
>
> **Anshul Tewari, Founder of Youth Ki Awaaz**

Bridging Local and National Action: Youth Ambassadors could provide insights to the government on what works at the ground level and what challenges are faced in living sustainably. They effectively become the eyes and ears of Mission LiFE across India's vast diversity. For example, if many Ambassadors report that lack of public transport is a barrier to "No-Car Sundays" in small towns, that insight can inform policy tweaks. Conversely, Ambassadors could also help translate national campaigns into local languages, ensuring central policies resonate with the public. In this way, they connect policy with people. Each cohort would formally be attached to the Mission LiFE secretariat, contributing to periodic reports or strategy updates based on their on-ground learnings.

Making It Happen–Support and Scale

To operationalise the Youth Ambassador programme, a robust support system would be required. First, a selection and training network should be established. This could leverage present structures: for example, the NYKS (Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan).[162] The selection would prioritize not just academic achievers but also young people who have shown initiative on climate action.

Once selected, Ambassadors would undergo training on sustainable technologies, community mobilization, and behavior change communication. They would be provided with toolkits like– a Mission LiFE mobile app or handbook–that gives them ideas, resources, and even a way to log their activities. Partnerships with other organizations like NGOs, environmental groups, and CSR initiatives would be helpful here. Many civil society groups are already active in climate education; collaborating with them can increase reach and provide mentorship to the Ambassadors. Public-private partnerships could bring in funding and innovation.–For example, a tech company might support an online platform for Ambassadors to collaborate on campaign ideas, or a renewable energy firm could sponsor solar kits for Ambassadors to distribute in villages.

Crucially, the programme should **recognise and reward** the Ambassadors to incentivize membership. They could receive certificates from the government acknowledging their service, and exceptional Ambassadors might get opportunities like an annual meeting with the Prime Minister or Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, or representing India in international youth forums. A national summit of Mission LiFE Youth Ambassadors could be held annually, as a forum for collaboration and to celebrate their contributions. Over the years, this would build a powerful alumni network–a generational cohort of climate-conscious leaders by 2047.

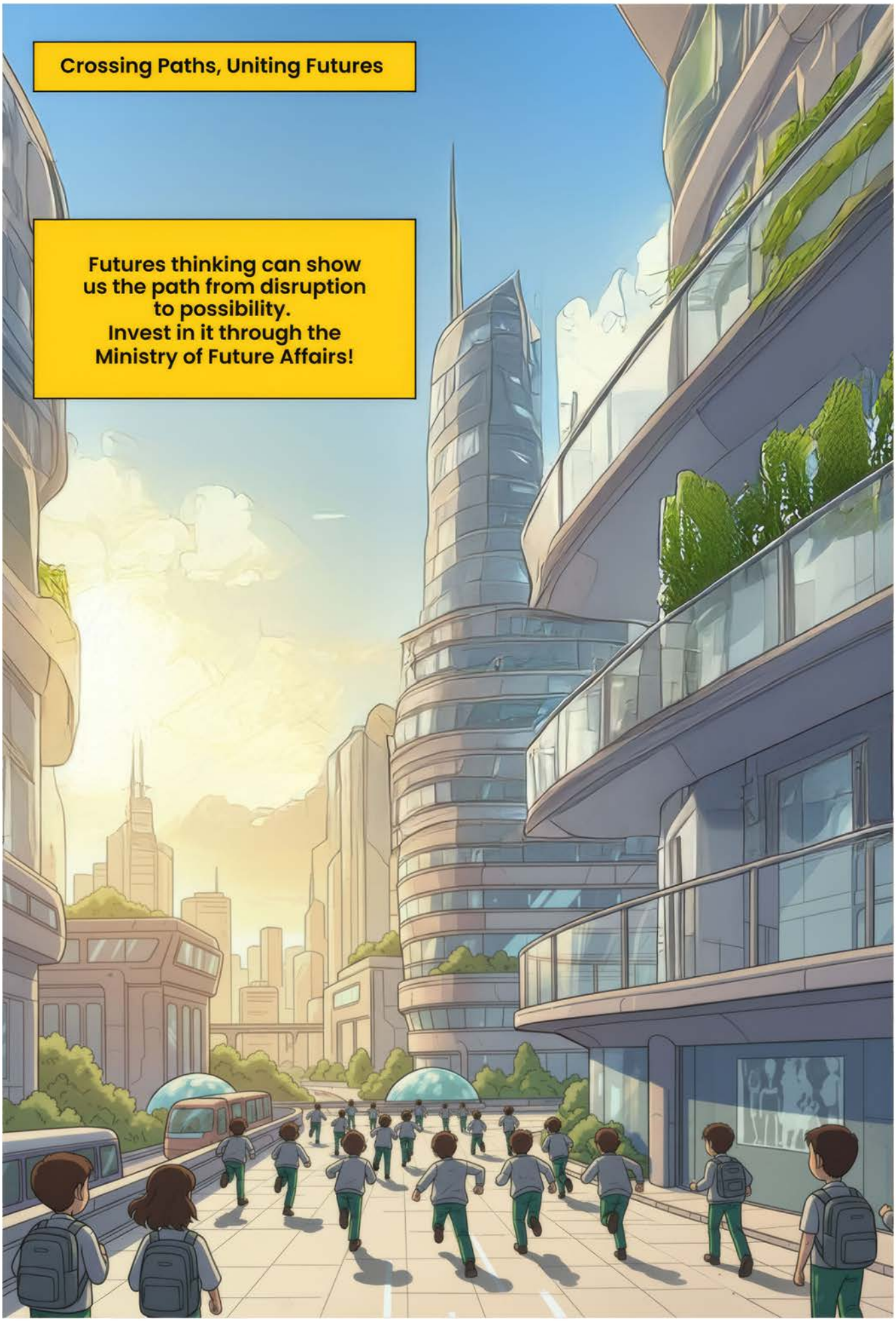
The Youth Ambassadors programme could expand in scope. Today's focus might be on lifestyle changes, but by 2030 or 2040, experienced Ambassadors could focus on **municipal climate cells**, advising city officials on urban resilience, or in **school eco-councils** mentoring younger students. The programme's flexibility means it could evolve as new issues arise (for example, in a decade the focus might shift to Ambassadors advocating for green jobs or climate-smart agriculture in their localities).

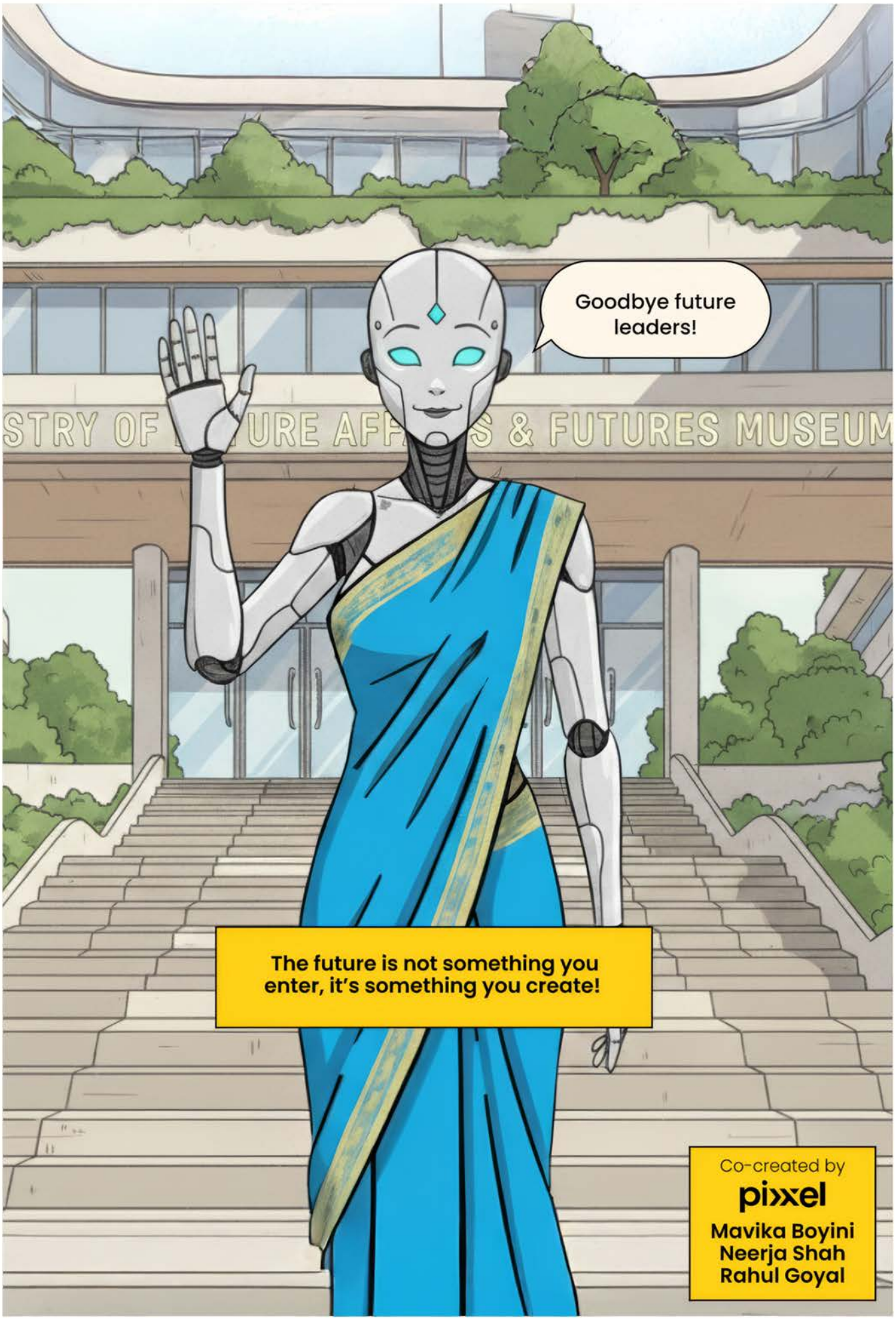
The core of the **Mission LiFE Youth Ambassador Programme** is to embed the energy and idealism of India's youth into our national climate priorities. It acknowledges that achieving a "Lifestyle for Environment" on a large scale is as much a social endeavor as a governmental one–and who better to lead a social movement than the youth?

By 2047, we envision an India in which sustainable living is second nature to every citizen, largely because young Ambassadors led the way in making it a mass movement. Thousands of young Indians would have grown through the programme into environmental leaders in their own right, greening their lives and influencing their families, communities, and workplaces. The ripple effects–on everything from reduced carbon emissions, to strengthened social fabric and international reputation, will be marked for generations.



Next Generation India Fellows Ruchira and Gurjeet in Kochi, India


Crossing Paths, Uniting Futures
Futures thinking can show us the path from disruption to possibility. Invest in it through the Ministry of Future Affairs!


Goodbye future leaders!
STRY OF URE AFF S & FUTURES MUSEUM
The future is not something you enter, it's something you create!
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Call to Action

A Future We Shape Together

India stands on the edge of a new era. The choices we make today will decide whether global disruption becomes a crisis or opportunity. From artificial intelligence to climate change, from the strain of urbanization to the promise of our demographic dividend, the challenges are immense. Yet, so is the energy and imagination of young people. In these pages we have laid out a roadmap that is both ambitious and achievable: bold reforms, new institutions, and a generation ready to lead.

The journey to India@2047 demands urgency in starting, patience in seeing results, courage to attempt what has never been tried before, and humility to adapt along the way. Most significantly, it demands unity of purpose—between young and old, government and citizen, city and village. The next step is not more words—it is action.

To India's Leaders and Policymakers

These proposals are not isolated dreams. Many are already seeded in government policies, state programmes, and community pilots. What is needed is scale, speed, and seriousness. We propose starting with the scaffolding: set up the **Futures Cell** in the PMO or NITI Aayog within the year to embed anticipatory governance. Signal intent by announcing a **Ministry of Future Affairs**—an institution that will keep India focused on long-term priorities, across governments and political cycles.

Take forward the **10 strategies of *Our Future India* agenda** by creating inter-ministerial task forces on Jobs and Care, Urban Revamp, Gen-AI, Climate Resilience, and Global Youth Leadership. Some reforms can start immediately—fold a Gig Workers' Commission into the labour code review, pilot Participatory Budgeting in the next urban mission, allocate budget lines for the Care Fund, Smart Village Hubs, and the Global South Fellowship. Where necessary, legislate for continuity: give MoFA statutory backing, propose a Future Generations Bill, and make intergenerational justice a principle of governance.

History will not only ask what you did for the young, it will ask if you did it **in time**.

To Public Institutions and Civil Society

India's future will be built in classrooms, courtrooms, media rooms, and panchayat halls. Each of you has a role.

- **Universities:** integrate futures studies and project-based learning so graduates are ready for a skills-first world.
- **Think tanks:** turn ideas into blueprints—draft the policy framework for Skills Vouchers, design the structure for a Global South Fellowship, help the government pilot what is new.
- **Civil society:** many of you are already workshopping participatory budgeting or community skilling. Align with national missions, share what works, and push for it to scale.
- **Judiciary and legal community:** explore legal mechanisms to safeguard the well-being of future generations.
- **Media:** shine a light on progress and gaps alike, keep young voices at the centre of national debate, and depict stories of change that inspire.

Together, become the champions and the watchdogs of the future.

To Young India—Changemakers, Builders, Citizens

This agenda is for you, but it will only succeed if it is led by you. You are not bystanders but architects of what comes next.

Organise in your own spaces. Form youth councils in your wards to shaping local planning. Turn your student club into a Mission LiFE hub. Start a small innovation project in your town or village. Apply for fellowships, step up as Mission LiFE Ambassadors, volunteer as Youth Delegates. Every action—big or small—matters.

Rural or urban, young women or young men, North or South—our strength is in our solidarity. Four in five young Indians already believe our actions today will decide India@2047. Make that belief visible every single day.

Do not wait for permission. Lead where you can. The ideas you trial today can become tomorrow's national policy.

A Final Word

2047 is not far away. We cannot afford drift or delay. This report gives us a map and a compass. The heavy lifting begins now, in ministries and schools, in gram sabhas and boardrooms, in start-ups and on street corners.

We imagine an India where every ministry includes a young representative or a futures analyst in its deliberations. Where every new law is tested for its effect on future generations. Where a new social contract binds the generations together.

So let us be clear in our charge:

To the government: be bold to make reforms that will last.

To institutions: work across silos, because transformation happens only when boundaries fall.

To young people: this future belongs to you; claim it with courage, and imagination.

As reiterated by the Prime Minister, ***Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Prayas*** (Everyone's support, everyone's development, everyone's trust, everyone's effort) is our guiding mantra.[163] Together, let us collaborate on this blueprint, refine it, and then back it with action. Judge us not by the promises we make, but by the outcomes we deliver—by 2030, and again by 2047: jobs and dignity for every young Indian; clean air, water, and a livable climate; governance that is representative, responsive, and future-ready; and an India that is a beacon of solidarity and solutions.

The future is watching. Let us rise to meet it.

Our dreams must now become our shared future.

Our Future India begins today.

Acknowledgments

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Annexure

Figure 1: Opinions on usage of AI in the workplace (This was a Multiple-Choice Question), split by age group.

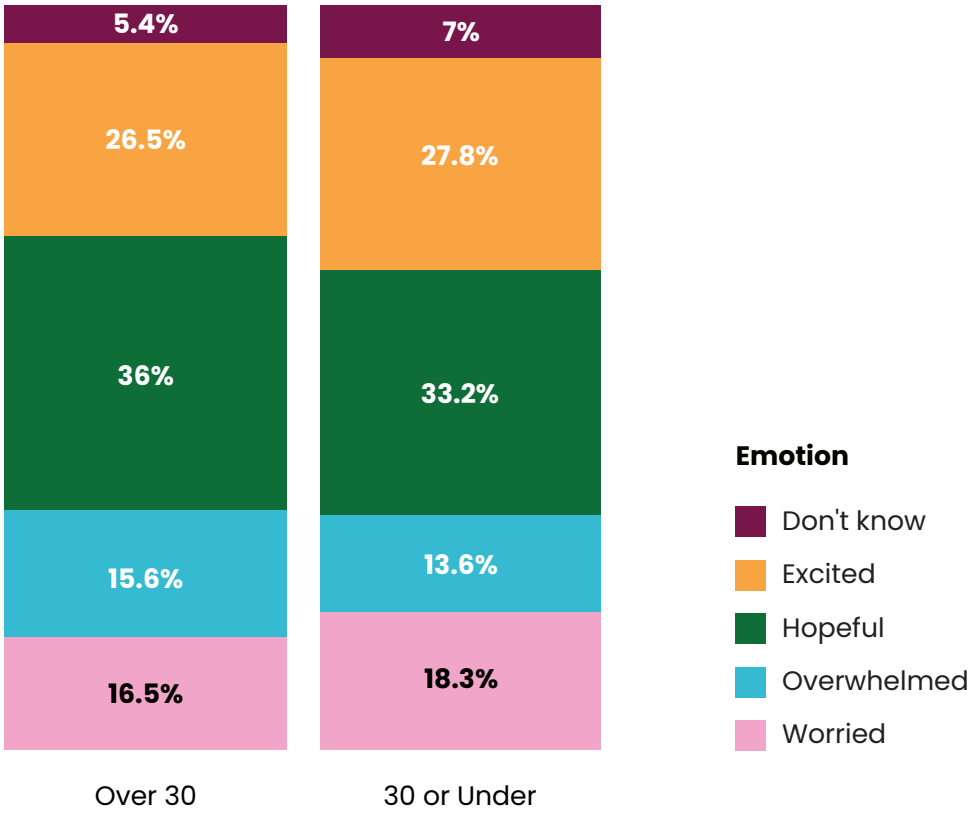


Figure 2: Perspective on young people's actions and decisions today shaping India in 2047 by age group

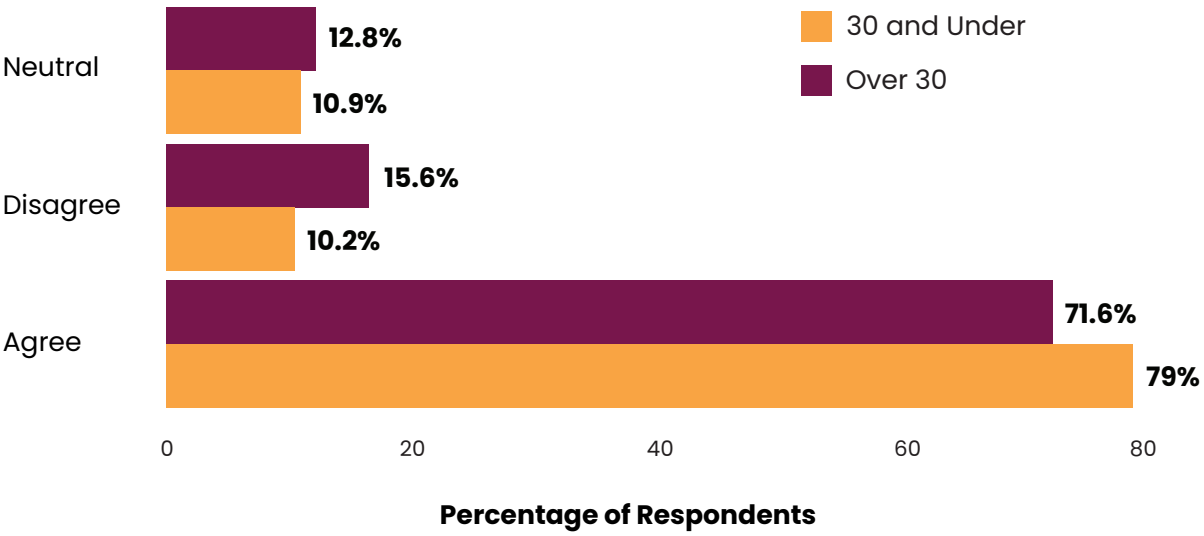


Figure 3: Opinion on whether domestic labour, including welfare for children, the elderly, household chores, etc., is as valuable as paid work done outside the home.

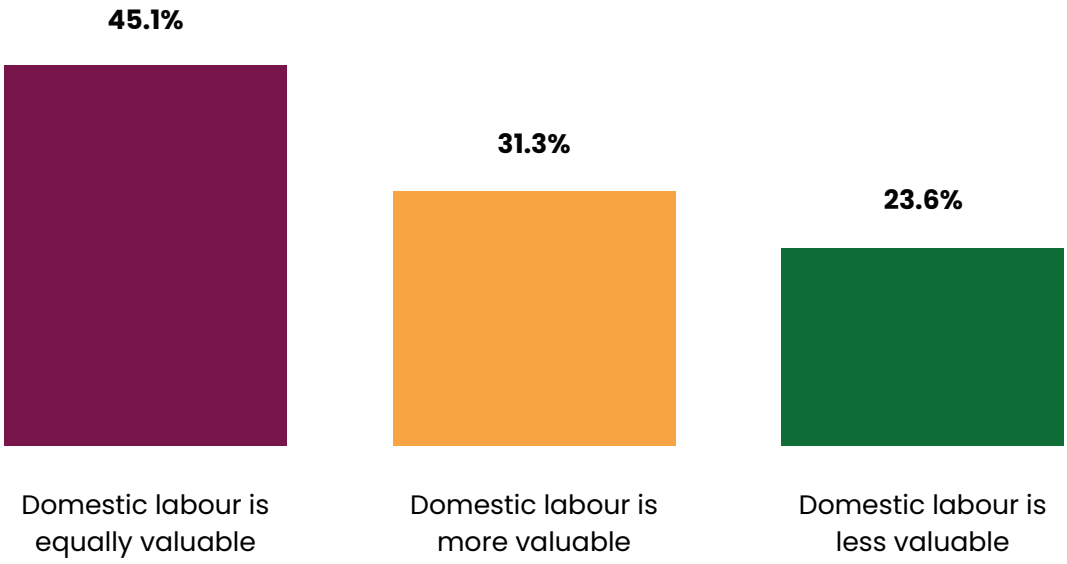


Figure 4: Outlook on whether domestic labour including welfare for children, the elderly, household chores etc., should be compensated (for example, by government schemes).

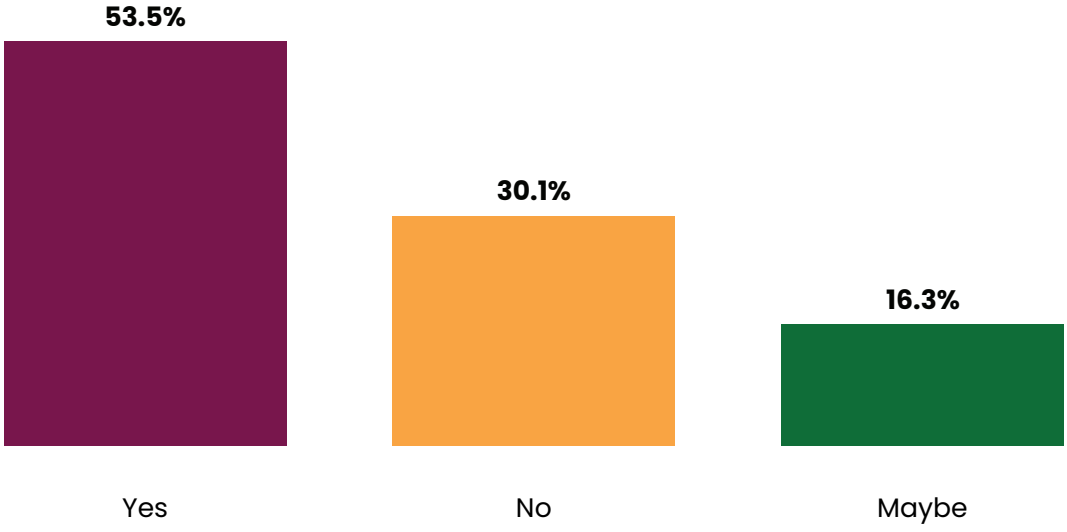


Figure 5: Belief in the biggest issue affecting quality of life in India by 2047 (Participants were allowed to select up to 3 responses).

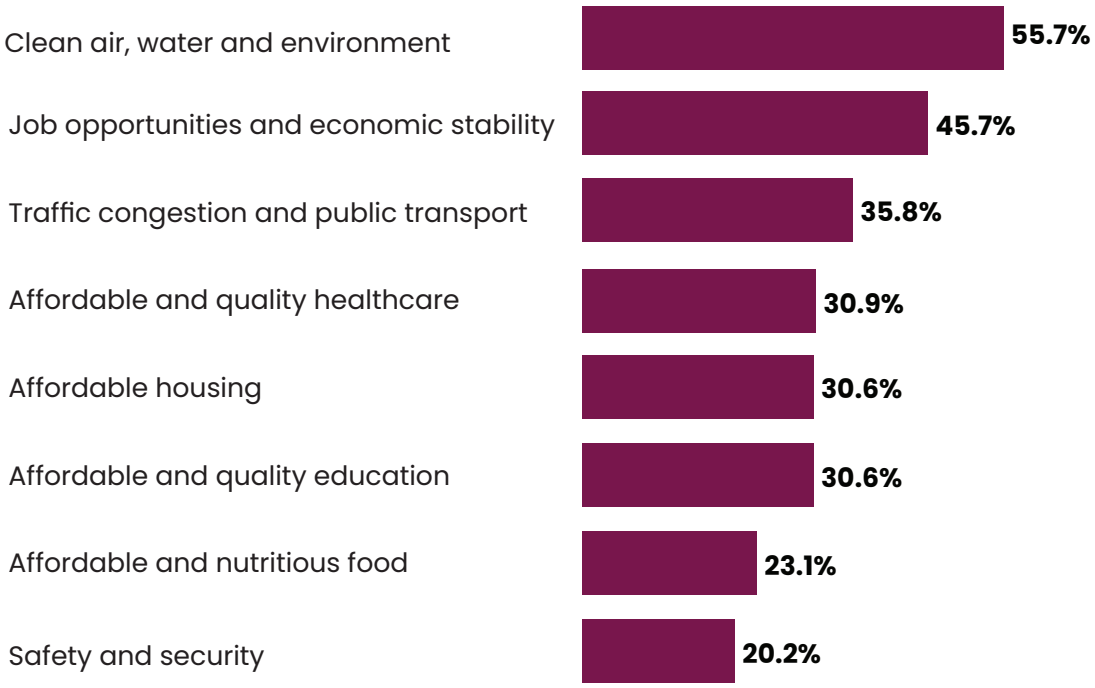


Figure 6: Opinion on whether climate change's negative impact on livelihood is causing anxiety

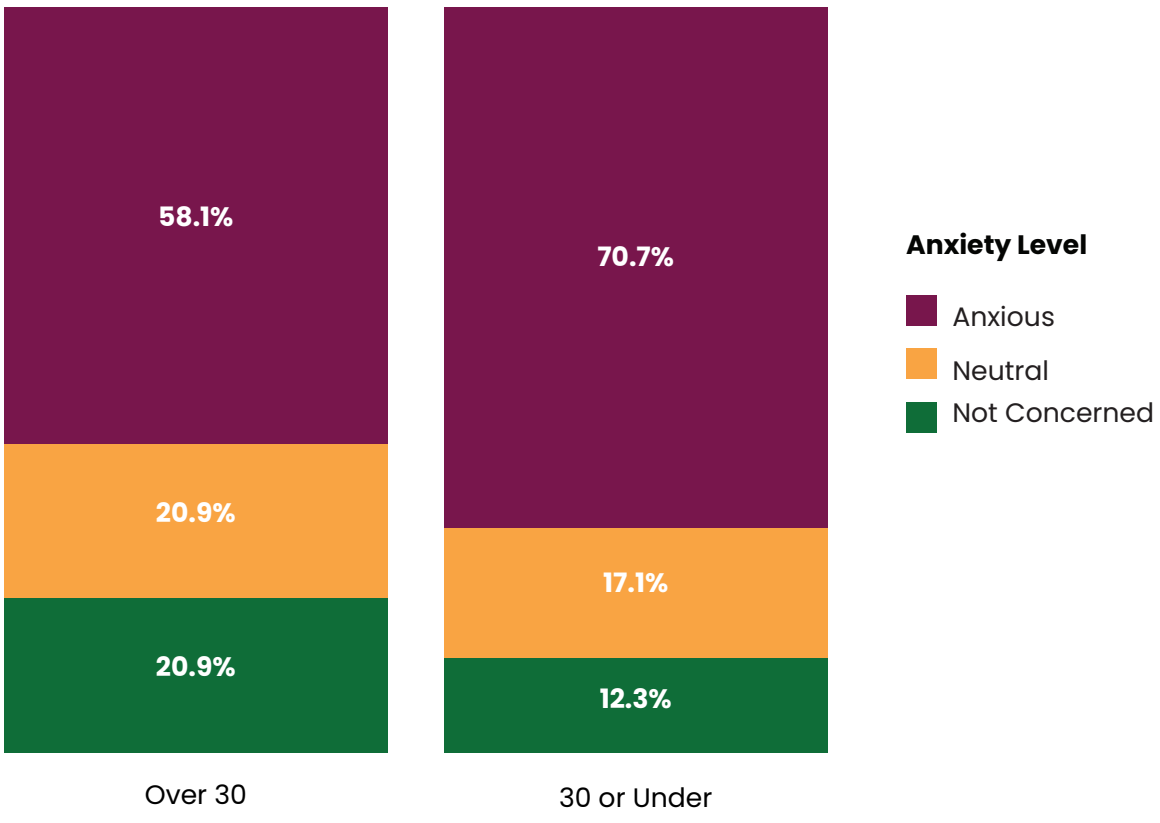
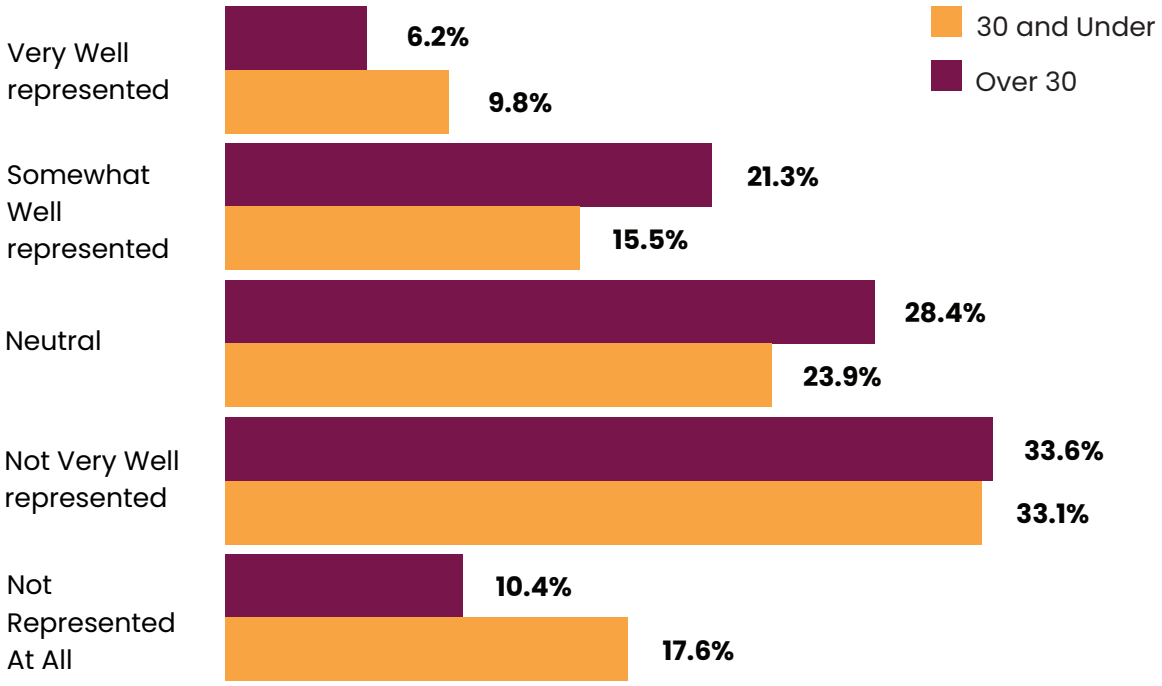


Figure 7: Opinion on young people in India being represented in decision-making at the national level by age group



Endnotes

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Our Future India celebrates the power of young people as architects of tomorrow.

The Next Generation India Fellows, supported by the United Nations Foundation and the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW), spent two years in dialogue with thousands of young Indians, experts, and policymakers across the country and diaspora. From this process, the Fellows have set out a shared vision and plan for a *Viksit Bharat@2047*.

Amid climate change, rapid urbanization, artificial intelligence, shifting demographics, and geopolitics, this report shows how bold ideas and intergenerational collaboration can turn disruption into opportunity. It calls for youth leadership and future-ready governance to chart India's path in a century defined by transformation.

Authored by the Next Generation India Fellows, *Our Future India* is both a blueprint and an invitation—to imagine, design, and build the future together.

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