

Interfaith Dialogue

AND COMMUNAL HARMONY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Editors

Sigamani Panneer
Chittaranjan Subudhi
Robert Ramesh Babu Pushparaj



AUTHORS P R E S S

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CHAPTER 4

Youth Civic Engagement for Peace and Sustainable Development

S. Lalitha

Abstract

Youth is a socially constructed, age relational concept and described as young people in the transition period with complexities. Structural and environmental factors shape the youth. The structural exclusion and marginalisation lead the youth to delinquent subculture. Youth with risk behaviours become harm for self and creates tension in the community neighbourhood. Conflicts against self and others, traumatic events, social problems, structural barriers, and inter-generational problems may endanger youth into tensions, risk behaviours and violence. Youth is a social capital of any community and their knowledge, skills and attitudes need to be enhanced to for meaningful civic responsibilities. Youth work is a professional help offered to youth for positive change and social development. Youth civic engagement can be used as a tool in youth work to enhance young people's participation for peace and community cohesion. Young civic engagement provides an opportunity for young people to develop a harmonious relationship with community members and to take collective action for sustainable development.

Keywords: youth, risk behaviour, youth work, youth civic engagement, peace and sustainable development.

Introduction

Youth is a dynamic and fluid category, denoted as a relational concept. It is constructed socially at different period of times based on the perspectives, approaches and actions of youth. Youth is also viewed as a period of transition and associated with complexities. Youth is a social unit and often influenced by the structural and environmental factors that shape the characteristics and value system. Structural barriers marginalise youth and further jeopardise them into risky behaviours. When youth face such complexities his/her position in the system turns a threat to self as well as to society. The positive