Future of India Foundation

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Making the world's largest democracy work for the world's largest youth population.

THE PROBLEM

Opportunity is concentrated in 10% of districts.

Without active distribution, it concentrates further.

70% of India's economic opportunity is in the top 78 districts; about 5% is in the bottom half.

85% of Indians live in the district they were born in.
India has ~800 districts.

India's mass economy is low demand and low productivity.

Low wages and micro enterprises reinforce each other, holding back consumption and growth.

55% of workers in 450 districts farm; only 4% have a salaried job paying ₹20,000+.

99% of enterprises are micro.

Jobs are a demand problem, not a skilling problem.

Where good work is missing, more training does not create it.

Almost **90%** of young workers earn less than ₹20,000 a month.

65% of young workers are in work with low advancement potential.

WHAT IS NEEDED

- → Make the district the unit of tracking and action
- → Widen markets for small enterprises
- → Raise returns to work through higher productivity and new work
- → Create Good Jobs

WHAT WE DO

Measure

youthpower.in: India's only youth opportunity map, tracking youth outcomes in every district of India, from 27 government databases and ~180 indicators. Close to 2 lakh views a month.

Tracking all 543 MPs: district development review meetings, MPs' local development funds and parliamentary questions.

Institutional Tracker: Parliament's focus on youth employment, tracked and analysed session by session.

Understand

State Handbooks of Youth Opportunity: five states, launched with MPs, Chief Secretaries, vice-chancellors and corporate leaders, and covered in national and regional press. A national handbook is in preparation.

Insights: what creates or constrains good work for young people.

Strategic Research: what is shaping young Indians' futures, from AI to institutions.

Tracking Indian Youth: young people documenting how their peers live and work, to humanise the data. 50+ Fellows across 5 cohorts, mentored by senior journalists; almost 200 profiles across 24 states and union territories.

Act: Good Jobs Agenda

Good Job: pays at least ₹20,000 a month and meets at least two of working conditions, security, learning and advancement. Only 1 in 10 young workers in India has one.

District and State Good Jobs Agendas: built with state or district administrations. A development plan for Good Jobs, made and implemented through existing government systems, with us steering and supporting the work. District pilots are under way.

Closing the last mile: training and support to improve ITIs and apprenticeships, market and export links for small enterprises, and access to social security, so the plan shows results on the ground.

Reform from what districts learn: lessons taken to state governments, and the governance reforms good work needs. Elected representatives who meet the constraints first-hand become champions for reform.

WHO WE ARE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Ruchi Gupta Columnist; Aspen Global Leadership Fellow; former McKinsey consultant

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Dr. Rajiv Kumar Chairman, Pahle India Foundation; Former Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog

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Underlined text links to more detail online.

RECOGNITION

In 2026, YouthPOWER was selected for the McNulty Prize Catalyst Fund, a joint initiative of the McNulty Foundation and the Aspen Institute, as one of six projects named globally.

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