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In the last two days we have heard frustration of minority youth in many countries. They talk of barriers and marginalisation that prevent the youth from realising their potentials and enjoying their culture. I bring you a different experience where the State has been positively inclusive and reached out to minority youth, successfully integrating them in mainstream life without affecting their distinctive culture. The United Kingdom needs complimenting for the approach it took since 2002. It has shown a way of enabling Minority youth to be agents of change for peace and stability.

Following some riots in Northern cities, the Government realised that some minorities do not engage effectively in a rigid secular system. So they set up a Faith Communities Unit which subsequently became Integration and Faith Division at the Department of Communities and Local Government.

This has enabled both the older and the younger generations of minority communities to engage with the Government and diffuse problems and flash points before they get out of hand. Importantly, the division listens to the young voices and tries to change attitudes and policies across various Government departments by arranging face to face meetings.

There is notable change in the confidence with which youth of minorities have participated in various aspects of public life, such as standing for Parliamentary elections, for high office in Government sectors and even in the private sector.

The department has encouraged youth in anti extremist dialogue too breaking down barriers between State, minority youth and various communities.

Alas this is not seen across all sectors, for instance in the diplomatic field or the media. The public financed BBC is still run by a white middle class cartel whose idea of diversity is accommodating race but not the cultural diversity of the nation. It will grudgingly get there as minority youth demand accountability.

We hope the UK will showcase its model as an example of best practice of reaching out to minority youth to become the agents of peace and stability

Jasdev Singh Rai