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# Gen Z In India and Its Characteristics

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#### **Abstract**

Gen Z (people born between 1996-2014) so far is the most progressive generation as compared to the generation before it. Gen z is a new wave of the modern world. It has led to advancements in various fields such as technology, jobs, relationships, mental health, etc. To know about them is important as they are about to take over the job market, They are well aware of their surroundings and are more vocal. They are the change-makers. Gen Z is advanced and privileged compared to the older generations (Gen X And Gen Y) however they are less progressive or independent than Gen Z in developed countries even though having access to similar knowledge and education.

Technology and Social media play a vital role in the development of Gen Zers as it enables them to have access to unlimited information and helps them connect with individuals and organizations from all across the world. Gen Z is highly influenced by Gen X as most of them are the children of Gen X, which sometimes might add as a barrier due to culture and societal norms and beliefs.

#### **Keywords**

Generation Z/ Gen Z/ Gen Zers/ Post Millinelians/ I Gen (Born Between 1996-2014)

Generation Y/ Millennials/ Gen Y (born between 1981-1995)

Generation X / Gen X/ Gen Xers (born between 1965-1980)

Technology

#### **Introduction**

This Paper is based on the various aspects of the Lives of Gen Z. This generation has been raised on the internet and social media, with the seniors completing college by 2019 and entering the workforce. They lead a slower life than their predecessors as they are more career-focused and do not wish to run into the later parts of life like settling down, marriage and children. We can say they are more responsible as They have lower rates of teenage pregnancies, consume drugs and alcohol less often. They are more concerned about academic performance and career development. They wish to be more politically and socially involved, they usually partake in a lot of activities that are beyond their benefit. Gen zers believe in overall development, which means not only being good at work or their field of career but also being well at mind, physical health, hobbies, personal and professional relationships. They also differ in their preferences as a consumer, they are more health-conscious. According to the Nielsen Global Health & Wellness Survey, Generation Z is more willing to pay a premium for healthy products, such as all-natural, GMO-free, sustainable, or vitamin-fortified foods. They believe in investing in experiences and services like travelling, shows, concerts rather than products. Even brands have started responding to their requirements with companies like OnePlus coming up with a Student Ambassador program for the student community and Starbucks with their point-reward system and many more. Gen z is considered to be a revolutionary generation because of their ideas and aspirations to make the world a better place.

This Paper also covers How Gen z in India has almost as much access to information and current affairs As Gen zers in developed countries but certain factors are not visible but add as a hindrance or even a push in their personal and professional lives. All in all, We can say Gen z in India is slightly different from Gen z in developed countries. This generation is considered to be the change-makers of the world. Gen z is highly influenced by its past to generations Gen x (people born between 1965-1980) and Gen Y (People born between 1981-1995) as most of them are the children of Gen x and Gen y plays an important role as they are the ones to provide a base for Gen z to flourish.

An Appropriate example of a typical Gen z would be **Alex Dunphy** (i.e Modern Family) and **Ajey Nagar** (**Carry Minati**), An example of Gen X is **Aishwarya Rai Bachchan** and Gen Y is **Alia Bhatt.** 

#### **Literature Review**

<u>Understanding The attitude of generation Z towards the workplace</u> Shilpa Gaidhani, Lokesh Arora, Bhuvanesh Kumar Sharma

Assistant Professor, Balaji Institute of Modern Management, Pune

Generation Z will represent more than 30% of the workforce soon. To create a positive environment and understand their motivating factors it is time for organisations and individuals to realise who they are and what they aim for. An appropriate proper understanding is required by the recruiters to find the right Gen z for the right job.

Gen z is considered to be well equipped with the technology they are a more do-it-yourself kind of a generation. Based on the **study of Bascha** (2011), they prefer transparency, self-reliance, flexibility and personal freedom are non-negotiable aspects of Gen Z work ethics and overlooking them could result in frustration among peers, less productivity, low morale and a lack of of employee engagement. They expect to be informed, to be allowed to be retorted, and to have their responses heard and acknowledged.

Gen Z will outshine their predecessors as they are unique and more realistic and will have their unique ways to run an organisation and boost their performance, they might even be the leaders to their predecessor generations.

#### The Characteristics of Generation Z by Anna Do lot

Gen Z is a generation whose first words probably were the world wide web. In one moment they can live in two worlds i.e. one is the virtual world as Instagram, Facebook and Snapchat always surround them, the other is the real world. For them, the switch between both the world is very quick and easy however some researchers emphasise that multitasking might become a problem for Generation Z. Gen z uses technology not only for connectivity but also to relax (Ex- Netflix) and also for work. Also, Gen zers might not be willing to relocate for work as the internet now can connect people throughout the world. Though most of them have not entered the job market yet, they are still professionally active through University clubs and societies, internships, volunteers etc. This may influence their lifestyle and life decisions and make them more independent and mature.

Generation Z and their Social Media Usage: A Review and a

## Research Outline By Gyan Prakash Yadav and Jyotsna Rai UP Rajarshi Tandon Open University, Allahabad

The Paper brings out the usage of social media by Gen zers and its impact on society. It is not only about the usage in terms of time but also how they use it. This generation wants their feedbacks and opinions to be heard and social media provides them with a platform to do so. Is generation is a vigour-ous contributor, high consumption of online content, creative and mash-up experts; they have a strong gravitational bond for online communication that they prefer to participate and remain connected via technology available at fingertips, The content differs from country to country as it is influenced by the environment (PESTCL) There are many influencers whose content directly speaks out to this generation like Malika Dua, Tahira Kashyap, Kusha Kapila etc. However, this all comes with a negative side. Individuals who share excess information and time on social media are prone to cyberbullying, adverse effects on mental health, virtual thefts, identity loss and Addiction to the Internet (keep on checking the phone for updates and notifications). Brands that mainly target Gen z like Netflix, Spotify, red bull etc also use social media as an essential way of promotion. Social Media has made Gen zers creators and aware of their surroundings.

#### Welcome to Generation Z by Deloitte

Gen z is considered to be the future of the economy. Gen z make up **24.3%** of the U.S. population and are on track to be the most diverse generation in US history by 2020. Gen z is independent and an entrepreneurial workforce whose career development is focused more on startups and early-stage companies, they look for work that interests them and not only high paid jobs. **51%** of the surveyed Gen z rate technology as the top industry to work for. Diversity is important to them, across race, gender, and orientation as compared to other generations. A new model of talent management shall emerge

- Access.- To understand the capabilities across your enterprise and the broader the environment
- Curate-To provide individuals and teams with the broadest and most meaningful range of development and growth
- Engage -To interact with and support your workforces, business teams and partners to build compelling relationships.

To attract Gen z at work companies need to change their way of hiring, organizing and retaining. Another important aspect to focus on is on inviting female candidates in the sector of STEM jobs. All in All developing a robust training and leadership development, with a real and tangible focus on diversity.

#### The Everything Guide to Generation Z by By Vision Critical With research by Maru/VCR&C

Gen z is considered to be optimistic and driven by personal motives and aspirations, but they are self-aware of the factors that are out of their control. Gen z prefers to save rather than spend, this could be as a result of the recession faced by the countries *post-9/11*, *post-Great Recession world and now Covid-19*. As consumers they are not easily convinced by high-end luxury brands, they prefer value and style based on their personality and preference. Their attention span is low as they were brought up in an era where there are advertisements that end in less than 10 seconds. They're early adopters of wearable technology and emerging platforms and unafraid of a future that features artificial intelligence and job automation. They believe in diversity, equality, nondiscrimination and the alleviation of poverty. Gen z often faces **FOMO** (Fear of Missing Out), this is a reason they are excellent researchers and always try to be up-to-date to feel included with the rest of the world. They are ready to work hard, take up new opportunities (risk takers) and are sure of their decisions.

## **Research Gap and Problem Definition**

Many studies have explained Generation Z across the world as a whole. Their aspirations, requirements, ambitions and thinking are assessed on a sample which is based in mainly developed countries like the United States. There are fewer studies that focus on a specific country/ geographical area. Different countries have different heritage and culture which may / may not affect the lives of Generation Z, but it is important to know about them, to have a proper understanding of Gen zers living in that particular nation. Also, the influence of Predecessor generations like Gen X and Millennials on Generation Z, have not been clearly defined in many studies. It is essential to conduct this study as the majority of Generation Z are about to enter the workplace and it is important to know them to build a positive and holistic work environment.

In this research conducted, the focus is to understand the new generation, Generation Z prevailing in India. How they are different as well as similar to Generation Z from developed countries and the level of influence they have from their predecessor generations. This research paper tries to draw attention to factors that might not be accounted for in global competition or level.

## Methodology

**Sources of Data** - Primary and Secondary data.

• Secondary data is mainly collected from online available resources like research papers, surveys, articles and blogs. This data obtained is by individuals, corporates, universities and research organisations as well. The secondary data provided a world view of generation z as a whole, which made it easier to draw analysis with comparison to the primary data collected. Secondary data provided a base to create the

questionnaire for primary research.

• Primary Data collected is quantitative and descriptive data has been collected through a survey through google forms with a sample size of 260 native Indian respondents divided amongst 145 (79 Females, 66 Males) Gen Zers, 56 (30 Females, 26 Males) Millennials, 59 (32 Females, 27 Males) Gen Xers. The questionnaire consisted of 45 Questions in the areas of career, relationships, preferences. The reason to choose primary data is to understand the urban Indian class. This class is considered to be more modern and privileged as they have easy access to technology and are more connected with the rest of

the world than the rural population.

Types of Data - Qualitative, Quantitative, Descriptive Data

Analysis approach - Statistical Approach

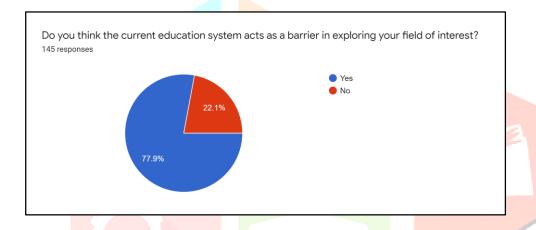
## **Generation Z and Education**

The Indian education system has always been a controversy for the youth. Every generation that comes believes there can be some amendment. But in the case of Gen z, there has been a huge gap because of technological advancements and networking with people from all parts of the world. This kind of interaction led to the concept of modern schooling in India.

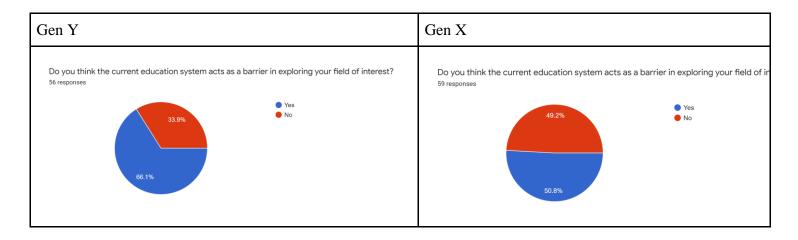
Modern Schooling is characterized by extracurricular activities to application-based education. The traditional method of learning only through books, writing theory-based projects and exams have certainly changed. Schools and colleges now offer International exchange programs, factory visits and much more as a part of their curriculum. From projects on paper to students presenting reports, startup ideas, open debates, research work for academic scores. The 100 - mark exams are now done in parts with giving equal importance to ideas, innovation, presentation skills, attendance. Education is now not limited to a set of books prescribed by the education board but is now open to learning through experiences, mistakes, opinions, examples and failure.

Classrooms are now a two-way communication where students are allowed to raise questions, bring out opinions and discuss the relevant topics with the professor.

The element that has led to the significant evolution in the education field is Technology, Technology has brought the concept of Self-educating, a concept in which an individual learns a particular skill or course Through the use of the internet. Students around the world have access to numerous courses, skills, languages on platforms like *Byju's*, *Coursera*, *Google training*, *Edx*, *Duolingo*. This has enabled Indian students to learn skills, courses, languages, and arts beyond their course outline. The choices are never-ending, and it has never been convenient to access knowledge. Through online debates, discussion platforms, webinars students across the world connect which has helped Gen z network and create connections all over the globe. This kind of exposure has created Indian students ready to face the world and new challenges that might come their way.



Even after so much development, still, students are not very satisfied with the system. According to the research conducted, about 78% of the gen zers of the sample size believe that the current education system acts as a barrier to explore their field of interest. This is because even after so much development in the technological field many universities are making the best out of it, also there is less flexibility by Indian universities in respect to choosing subjects, dropping semesters, providing a wide range of projects etc. It is believed that the approach of the system is theoretical and not practical or realistic. Students are bound to follow the prescribed courses, subjects and projects that are pre-decided by the university.



Surprisingly even Gen Y and Gen X population of the sample size agree, not in the same proportion but the favour of Gen Z's dissatisfaction towards the Indian education system.

COVID19 is another remarkable incident in the education sector as it led classroom teaching to go online on platforms like *Zoom*, *Google classrooms*, *MS teams and so on*. The notes that were copied down from the whiteboard into the notebook, are now shared on the email of the students. The Benefits of technology are limited to only those Indian Gen zers who can access the internet and afford devices that support these applications and platforms. According to a new UNICEF report, just 24 per cent of Indian households have internet connections to access e-education, and there is a large rural-urban and gender divide that is likely to widen the learning gap across high, middle and low-income families. This means only a certain population of Gen zers in India can afford online education and all the benefits associated with it (as discussed above). Indian education pays less attention to soft skills development and overall personality development which are of the most important attributes for a person. Only certain universities focus on taking interviews before selecting their students. Major universities, including state universities, take students only based on marks.

#### **Gen Z and Finances**

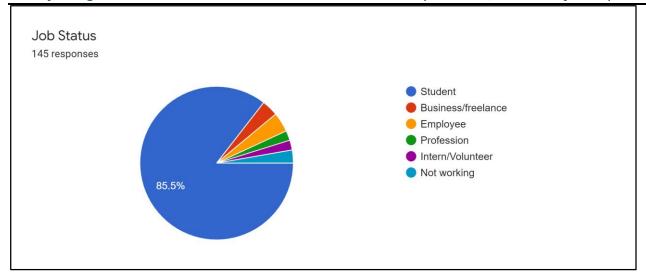
GEN Z in India is more financially aware than the previous generations, they have seen Gen X and Millennials getting burdened under the never-ending student loans, home loans etc. Their attitude is more towards saving than spending.

Even their purchase behaviour is different than other generations-. They have a habit of verifying their purchases, comparing prices of various brands before making a purchase, looking for cheaper substitutes, looking for quality standards etc. This type of behaviour change is due to increased access to information. Brands have also started responding to the needs of the upcoming generations through constant efforts on sales promotions and public relations. Gen Z may soon surpass Millennials in savings—35% said they plan to start saving for retirement in their 20s, versus 12% of Millennials who said the same, according to a study by the Center for Generational Kinetics (CGK), Gen z is a more realistic and practical generation they are aware of their surroundings and what might come in the future, at a very young age they start planning for their retirement through investing in schemes, fund and options. With increasing financial knowledge and decreasing dependence on parents, an era of self-funded marriages is also observed.

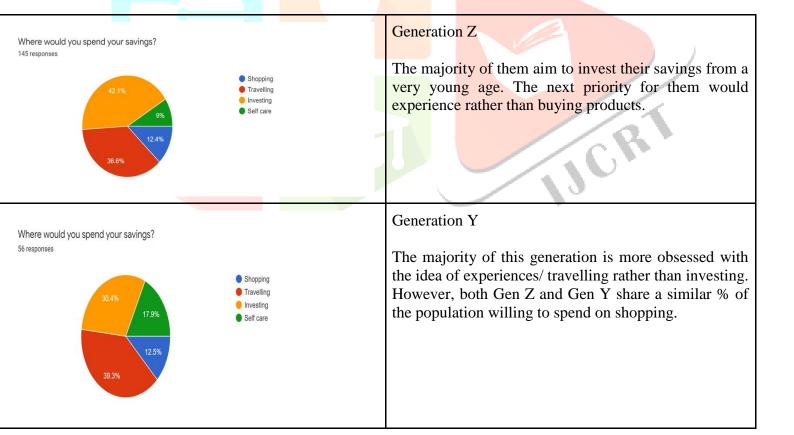
According to the Betterment for Business report, 88% are actively saving at least some of their money monthly, including into their retirement funds. Seventy-three per cent are contributing at least 3% for their retirement savings, and 23% are saving more than 8% (across the world)

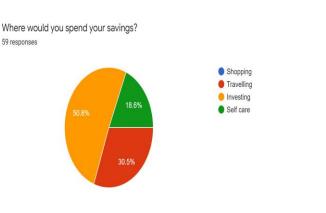
Indian Gen z is not as independent as we know, In many developed countries, children start earning and managing money at an age as low as 13 years. They take up simple jobs like being a pet walker, babysitting, working at a fast-food joint etc, in simple words - Part-time jobs. This type of culture is not encouraged in Modern India, If a child takes up a voluntary job like babysitting there are many barriers to it. If one is doing the job for his/her relative or someone known to their family, they are not allowed or encouraged to be paid for it. If the job is done for someone unknown it is considered to be child labour and society starts to assume that the family of Gen Zer is going through financial turbulence, the main aspect of teaching children the importance of money and hard work is lost in society's judgement and assumptions.

The internship system also remains unregulated because of excess demand oversupply, there are hardly any paid internship opportunities for students.



Out of the 145 Gen Z respondents, only 12 % of Gen zers are actively into some kind of job/business/profession/internship. Rest are only students or not doing anything at all. This depicts how Indian Gen z is mainly dependent for all their expenses on their families.





#### Generation X

They are shifting towards the retirement stage and their top priority is investing their savings.

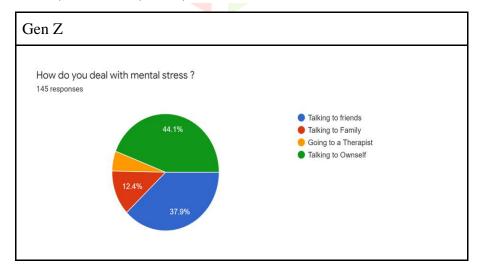
Shopping is not on the list because they are moving towards the empty-nester stage of life so travelling and self-care are the main priorities.

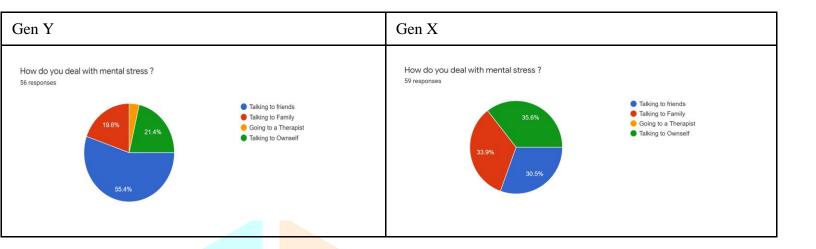
## Gen Z and Mental Health

Mental health is one of the most less talked about topics in India. Sure, Movie Stars artists and social media influencers like *Deepika Padukone, Tanmay Bhat* etc have come out with their experiences of mental health issues, however, the statistics still say "India has one psychiatrist for over 2 lakh people".

Now and then one visits a doctor for even an inch of discomfort with any body part, but when it comes to our mind, Indians become ignorant.

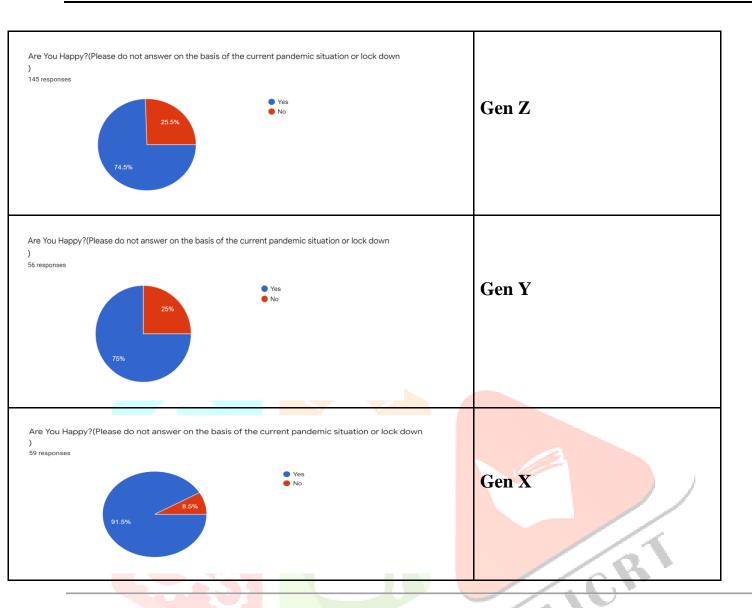
Cases of *suicides, depression, anxiety, PTSD* etc have been growing each year because of various reasons prevailing in the modern world, ranging from work-life and exam stress to likes on a social media photo. Gen z is burdened with competition and the fear of missing out (FOMO). Every hour one student commits suicide in India, with about 28 such suicides reported every day, according to data compiled by the **National Crime Records Bureau** (NCRB). The NCRB data shows that **10,159 students died by suicide in 2018**, an increase from 9,905 in 2017, and 9,478 in 2016.





Certain stereotypes also prevail in most households in India that therapy is for insane people. If a person visits a therapist, most people jump to the conclusion that he/she is getting insane or mad and start treating them differently, Because which people avoid visiting a psychologist and decide to let mental problems stay within. From the above figures, it can be derived that Gen z is influenced by its previous generations in this field, as very few are willing to visit a psychologist or seek therapy. The sad part is Gen z is not willing to open up about their issues with anyone except themselves. From the Gen X data, it is obtained out of the sample size not even one Gen X is open to the idea of therapy. This kind of social attitude affects their relationships, work-life and also promotes self-harm. Four in 10 American adults (42%) have seen a counsellor at some point in their lives. Millennials and Gen X have more interest in counselling in the developed nations. The mentality of not paying attention to mental health can be a major factor that can hold back Indian youth from growing.

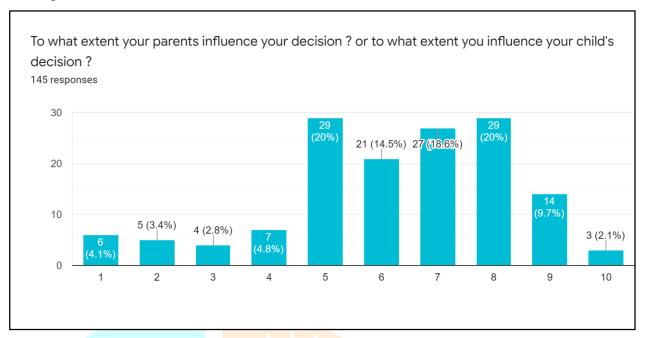
The evolution of technology has brought us a lot of benefits, but there is a dark side too. Gen z which spends most of its free time on social media now feels discomfort in their own lives as they tend to create non-realistic reference points. One might see a celebrity travelling every week from one country to another and might start thinking that his/her life is boring or stagnant. However, no one takes into account factors like financial background, career paths, wealth, job requirements, time commitments etc. Their reference points change once they start following a particular celebrity example:- **Kim Kardashian**, they start hating themselves for the way they look or the work they do, which leads them to anxiety and depression. Educating this generation about mental health and the science of well being is the need of the hour. Gen Z is considered to be a more privileged generation as compared to its predecessors, however, they consist of a more unhappy population (25.5%) as compared to previous generations (25% Gen Y, 8.5% Gen X).



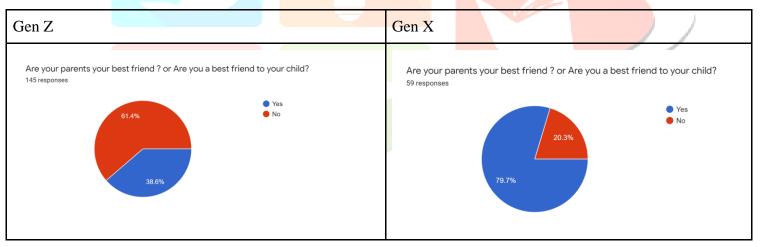
## Gen Z and Relationships

When we refer to relationships that can be with one's parents, grandparents, siblings, friends, relatives and partners. Indian culture plays a very vital role when we talk about relationships. The relationship between Indian Parents and Children has always been like a question mark. In India, the Majority of children have always made their decision based on their family's aspirations and opinions. It is widely considered that the decisions made by parents are always right and there's no need to cross-question them If a child tries to go against his/her family's expectations or judgement he/she is considered unethical. As seen in the previous section, this kind of cultural barrier is a reason why Gen zers do not talk to the family regarding mental stress. These decisions can be about career, marriage, friends, religious beliefs and sometimes even food preferences (Vegetarian or Nonvegetarian). However Gen z marks a slight change as they now believe in asking questions and going to the core of the decision or opinion formulated by their parents, they are a more vocal generation as compared to

previous ones. This, however, does not ensure that decisions taken by Gen zers are wholly by their opinions and expectations.



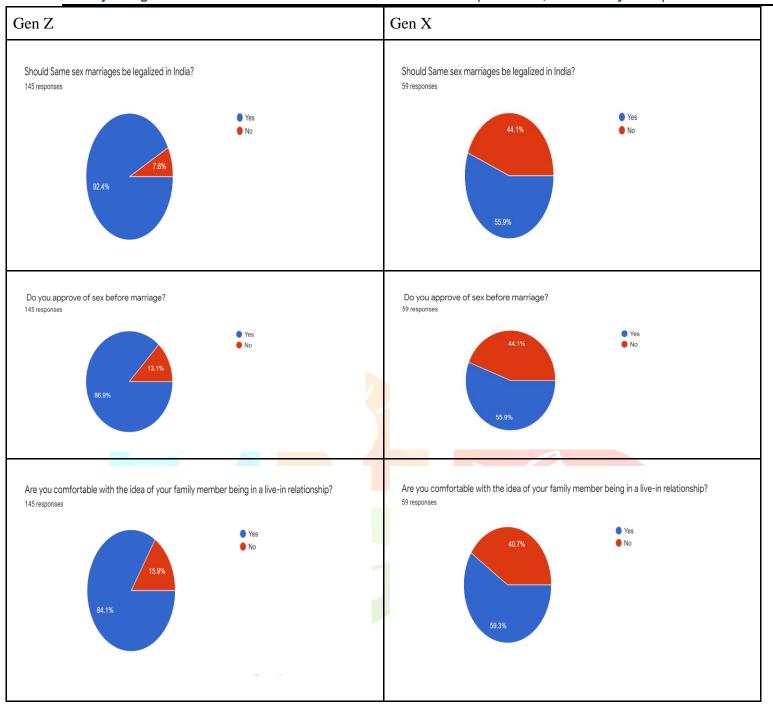
Through the survey conducted it was noticed that Gen z is highly influenced by what their parents think and believe. The majority of the opinion of the Gen zer respondents lies towards the higher range of influence (123 respondents)



#### Gen Z is the children of Gen X.

Gen Z is less (61%) of the opinion that their parents aren't their best friends, however, the majority (80%) of Gen X believes that they are a best friend to their child.

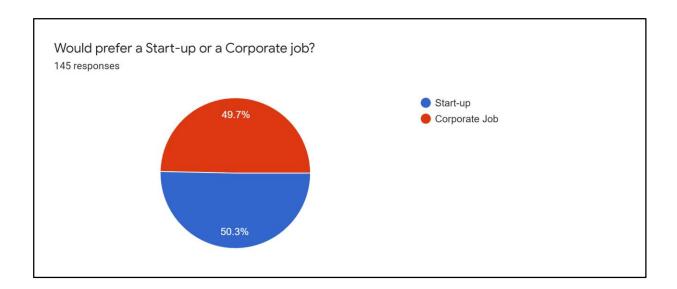
The main reason for this differing thinking of Gen X is either their children were not vocal about their opinions or Gen X is sure of what they believe in. A barrier still stands in front of certain topics that aren't to be discussed with the parents like *homosexuality*, *atheism*, *Sex*, *Drugs* etc. This kind of restrictions has led many millennials and gen z's to not run their life in accordance to them whether it's about to enter into a career or marry someone. Below are the questions asked, where a sign of disagreement between both the generations is observed.



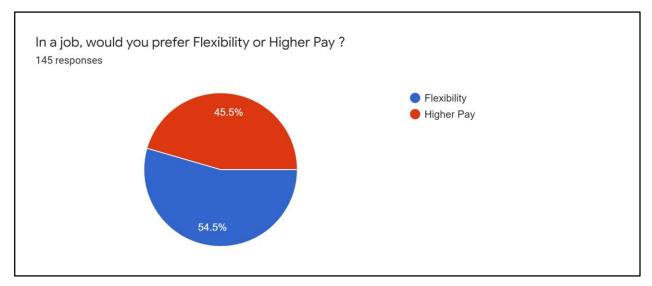
Technology plays a very vital role in the relationship of Gen z between their friends and love life. Through social media and video conferencing platforms, this generation can connect with loved ones from across the world, however, because of so much access they are often distant from loved ones just sitting next to them. Most of the Gen zers focus on clicking pictures and uploading stories rather than spending quality time with friends.

#### Gen Z and Jobs

Gen z is more of a do it yourself generation, they focus more on formulating solutions rather than formulating the question. They have more leadership and managerial qualities. They have an entrepreneurial edge to their personality. In India, a similar trend is noticed among the Gen zers. over **1300 startups were launched in 2019** in India. over 8,900 tech startups in India now. It is a generation of job givers rather than job seekers. Many studies even state that they are going to be the future bosses of Gen Y and Gen X.



In the figure above 50.3% of Gen Zers are willing to have their start-up or work with a startup rather than having a corporate job, the reasons for this can be flexible and working for something they are concerned and willing to work for.



The Gen zers even if they opt for a corporate job are looking for flexibility rather than higher pay. They are considered to have a balance between personal and professional life. They want to do meaningful work that

creates value for them as well as consumers or clients. The organisation they work for should add to their career advancement and professional development. This era of technology has also created a lot of new job positions like *youtube and social media influencers, Vloggers, Bloggers, Content creators, SEO consultants, Digital marketers* Etc. A job market is a place where we can accept that Generation Z worldwide is on the same page.

#### **Conclusion**

There are a lot of aspects of a person's life, only a few have been covered in the above study. In the abovementioned sections, a common trend that can be noticed is that technology plays a vital role in all of this. The main factor that differs this generation from others is its easy access to the internet and connectivity throughout the globe. This generation at its toddler's age wasn't playing with a rattle, they were having smartphones to play with instead. Gen Z understands the use of technology very well. They can accustom themselves easily with the introduction of new software or device which might not be completely convenient for the previous generations. However, the benefits of technology depend a lot on access to the internet and adequate funds to buy devices as well. Only nearly 50 % of the Indian population will have access to the internet by the end of 2020. This is a factor where we can see only a part of Generation Z in India can grow and develop, the others are not as progressive as those with access to technological luxury. Even though technology has made this generation more aware and self-reliant, it comes with a negative side as well. This generation is more prone to numerous crimes that are evolved through technology itself like cyberbullying, hacking, cyber theft, loss of identity and online threats. In fact, according to a 2017 report, Indian consumers had lost over 18 billion U.S. dollars due to cybercrimes. In 2018, there were over 27 thousand cases of cyber crimes recorded in the country, marking an increase of over 121 per cent compared to the number of cases just two years back. This generation is considered to be the future leaders and changemakers of the economy and society. Certain studies predict that 10 years from now there will be an entire revolution in the economy because of the boosting stage of Gen Zers.

#### **Limitations to the Study**

The majority of Secondary data collected is not specific to the Indian Population.

For Primary Data: As a result of the pandemic and rules regarding social distancing

- A larger audience couldn't be approached
- The Gen Zers population of rural India and the underprivileged class couldn't be reached, only the privileged class and urban Gen zers were included in the sample of primary data.
- Qualitative data and one on one interviews were not conducted.

• Reliability of the answers by the respondents cannot be guaranteed as the attention span of the respondent cannot be assured in an online survey( absence of interviewer)

#### **Future Scope**

This research paper doesn't cover all the aspects of Generation Z, there are certain areas that this paper does not represent that can be covered in future studies. Political involvement, religious beliefs, feminism, racism, STEM jobs, food references, fashion trends etc are certain fields in which more research can be conducted. A more detailed analysis of the relationship between Gen Z and millennials and Gen Z and Gen X can be studied. A side of rural India's and not so privileged population of generation z can be studied and analyzed.

The datasets generated during and/or analysed during the current study are available in <a href="https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/14hdZEN8Kx2R6igQfPCxwBUbj0UWyx5PMLF0lgqf3AyI/edit?usp=sharing">https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/14hdZEN8Kx2R6igQfPCxwBUbj0UWyx5PMLF0lgqf3AyI/edit?usp=sharing</a>

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