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## Generation Gap: An Emerging Issue of Society

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### Abstract

*Generation gap is a serious problem observed in youth and their elder generations due to various factors. It is observed that it is more between children and parents, the gap however is expected to be wider in case of grandparents and grandchildren. This conflict when gets severe, associates with serious adolescent problematic behavior. In this paper we collected information from the survey of approximately 200 people and came across with the well summarized statistical analysis which clearly showed that there were some issues between different generations due to many reasons like lack of communication, different perspectives, cultural variables and effect of technology. By the analysis of the data we came to the conclusion that both the generations agreed that they were both facing some difficulty in understanding each other . It could be stated by the outcomes of the survey that this bridge can easily be built upon by discussion, spending time with each other, understanding each other and through proper communication. We also generated a Facebook page “Genchat” to help the people facing problems related with generation gap, by building a common platform for every generation to come forward and express their views on various aspects.*

**Keywords:** *Communication, Generation Gap, Opinions, Society, Technology, Youth*

### I. Introduction

The notion of generation gap has existed for a long time but over the recent years it has become more prominent in our society and is now being seen and addressed as a major problem of our society . Generation gap as stated by definition is considered as a difference between personal choices, opinions and perception of different generations which leads to conflicts and gap between family members. It affects not just relations but also day to day activities, due to advancement of new technologies and lack of communication between the younger generation and the older one. Generation gap has created a rift in familial relationships[1]. Several efforts and studies have been done in order to understand the main causative factors of this issue, to try to find some solutions to somehow reduce its growing hold over the arising conflicts between different generations[2].

Studies have been done that urge to explore inter-generational aspects [3]. A study was done by Asia Pacific Institute of Ageing Studies (APIAS), Lingnan University under the leadership of Prof. CM Chan and Prof. David R. Phillips that focused on building a partnership model in linking universities, schools and local communities through a series of well-structured program that included training workshops and social service projects. It was designed to encourage interactions and communication amongst young and old generations [4]. It was a longitudinal study conducted in 2001 and it was named University School Link Partnership Projects (USLP). The outcomes focused on how the young and old are mutually benefitted on their social competence. The design of the program was to make the two generations achieve assigned tasks and it was evident that the program had a positive impact on communication and mutual understanding amongst the participants [5]. The intergenerational gap needs to be bridged by the joint efforts of both the generations in order to break the “ice” and build a close parent- child relationship. Both the generations should try to explain their ideas to family members in a forgiving manner.

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## II. Reasons for generation gap

### • Effect of Technology

The growing technology can also be thought to affect family relationship and could be the major reasons for conflicts. Internet has attracted a lot of attention which has raised several questions like inequality, access, the quality of the content, the implication of internet and new technology on children's educational and social development. It has been seen over many debates and policies that in management and distribution of internet, children and youngsters are regarded with ambivalence. Being considered both as the "digital generation" in online competencies but also very vulnerable and potentially at risk. It has been observed that the older generation also seem to share this quality of ambivalence especially as their children get more expert with handling new technologies and internet. So, overall parents are positive about the educational prospects provided through new technologies but are at the same time concerned about the negative prospects of technologies and internet [6-8]. Though many of these new technologies which come with both opportunities or risks are not new to the society but its effect is more widespread and immediate, especially for teenagers and younger generations [9].

Many empirical researches suggest that most of the older generations believe that the internet can help their children to do well at colleges and schools, that is why, they acquire domestic access of internet in the first place [10]. Though, critics have stated and are mainly concerned about the moral panics motivated by technology and the response of older generations which might have constructed a false ideal of the vulnerable child, which could mislead researches and policies [11-12].

So it can be said that many of the members of older generations are not able to accept the new technologies whereas the majority of younger generation sees it as liberating tool which serves various opportunities from education to career and many other aspects that allows establishment of youth culture. This difference in opinions, thoughts and choices leads to conflicts between their generations and hence create a gap.

### • Different Perceptions of Relationships

It is evident that parents and their teenage children may evaluate their relationship with each other in different ways. Through some studies we may be able to account for the reasons behind this. A study was done which investigated and compared the perceptions of intergenerational solidarity among 2590 adult child/older parent dyads from the national survey of families and households [13]. This study indicated that there is a high degree of disagreement on how parents and their children view their relationship. It was observed that parents usually reported better relationship quality whereas the children reported better contact and exchanges of assistance, but not as positive relationship quality as stated by their parents [13]. The variables found to influence the correspondence between the two generations were age, child's marital status, gender and residential proximity. It is known that familial relationships between a parent and a child is amongst the most important relations and is a major contributor to the emotional and psychological well-being of both generations [14]. Associated with different assistance between both the generations [15]. A study suggested that though there is agreement on certain aspects between different generations but parents are likely to perceive their relations with their children positively [16-17]. Recent works have examined the social, structural aspects of intergenerational relationships in later life which suggests that "societies and individuals within them are ambivalent about relationships between parents and children in adulthood" [18].

The contradiction according to this study was because of desires for personal autonomy and dependence. Thus the parent-child relationship in adulthood is viewed as irreconcilable contradictions at social levels like statuses and norms [18]. It was also seen that parents and children will have more similar reports if they were given congruent expectations, positions and resources in society [19]. To overcome this problem, researchers should address the quality dynamics of intergenerational relationships along with recognizing that multiple perspectives are important so that the problem could be understood in a better way and possible solutions could be found.

## D.EFFECTS OF CULTURAL VARIABLES

It has been observed that cultural values does have an impact on generation gap since it is considered both a social and cultural construct as observed in the survey below. It has also been observed that generation gap is

a phenomenon accepted by Americans but it still baffles parents from Asian countries[20].Traditionally, Asians tend to live in joint families where family is hierarchical. Many generations live together. Age, gender and generational status of family members are major determinants of behavior and relational roles [21].Generally, a high importance of conformity is seen. Inter-dependence is promoted and self- identity is inhibited[22]. Being conservative is encouraged, the welfare and integrity of family is given more importance over individuality.[23] whereas western culture supports self- identity and nuclear family system in middle class. Due to globalization and access to different cultures, The Asian teenagers have been able to have a look at western familial relationships which is far more relaxed as compared to Asian families, this creates a difference in opinions between the teenagers and their conservative Asian parents and adds to the already present generation gap and causes conflict.

### **E.LACK OF COMMUNICATION**

As per the survey it was deduced that lack of communication is one of the major reasons for generation gap. Parents are highly pressurized to strike a balance between work and family, though they do it to earn a better living for their children but they forget that this costs them the time with their children. Most of their time is spent on heavy work load and stress in the work place. On the other hand, children do not share their school life and everyday events with their parents, which on the whole leads to parents making huge sacrifices to earn a living but the children are being neglected at the same time, this causes communication barriers in the family and adds to generation gap.

### **III. Methodology**

The methodology included getting in contact with people and trying to understand their perspective on “generation gap”. A survey was done by framing a questionnaire regarding important questions related to the topic of the paper that was for individuals from different age groups including children entering the age of puberty and parents above 40yrs of age to understand the perspective of different age groups about issues related to generation gap and its day to day effect on daily life and also on important decisions undertaken by both the generations. The data obtained was then analyzed using excel sheets and pie diagrams and their choice of answers based on the topic. This analyzed data was then discussed along with some solutions to overcome the problem of generation gap. The questionnaire was created keeping in mind the difference in thinking and opinions of different generations and keeping it completely unbiased and as informative as possible so that we could reach the bottom of the problem.

### **IV. Findings**

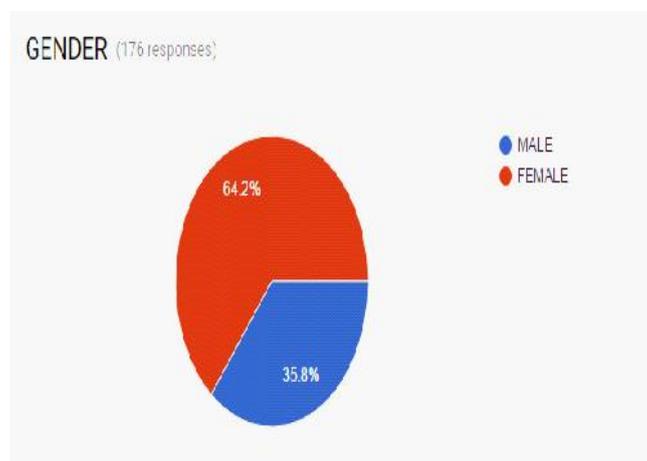
#### **• Profile of Respondents**

A total of 175 participants filled the survey. There were 9 participants in the age group of 15-20 years and 87 participants were in the age group of 20-25 years. The results of survey depicted that majority of participants were youth.

| <b>Generations</b> | <b>No. Of participants</b> |
|--------------------|----------------------------|
| Older generation   | 9                          |
| Younger generation |                            |
| 15-20yrs           | 74                         |
| 20-25yrs           | 87                         |
| 26-30yrs           | 5                          |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>175</b>                 |

## Statistical Analysis

**Pie Chart 1**

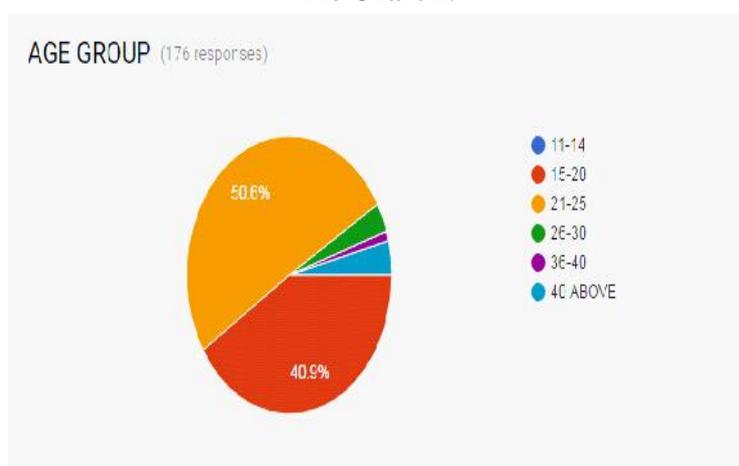


### Observation and Conclusion:-

From the above chart, it was observed that females participated actively in the survey and their percentage of filling the survey was more than that of the male members.

Thus it can be concluded that female participation came out to be 64.2% while male participation was only 35.8%.

**Pie Chart 2:**

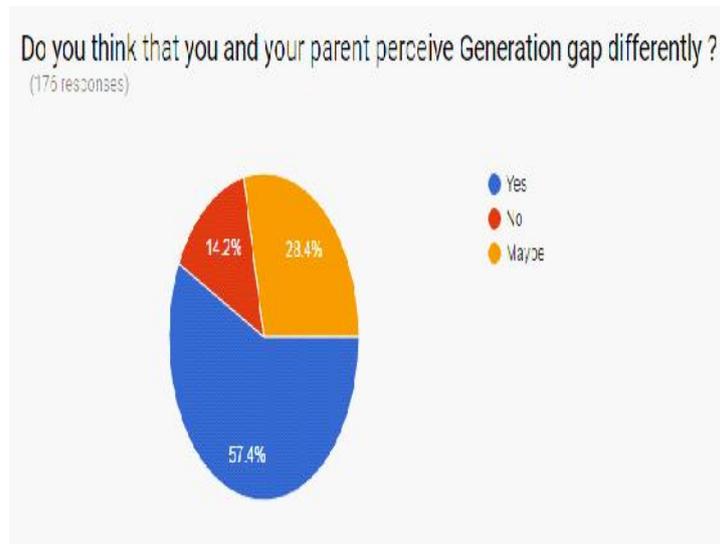


### Observation and Conclusion:-

From the above pie chart, we observed that the members of age group 21- 25 years showed huge response in participating in the survey. Second most actively participating age group was of 15-20 years that were teenagers. Members of 36-40 years age group were the least participative.

It is evident from the survey that the youth actively participated in filling the questionnaire. This shows that the youth today is concerned about the problems they face due to generation gap and is very vocal about their opinions.

**Pie Chart 3**

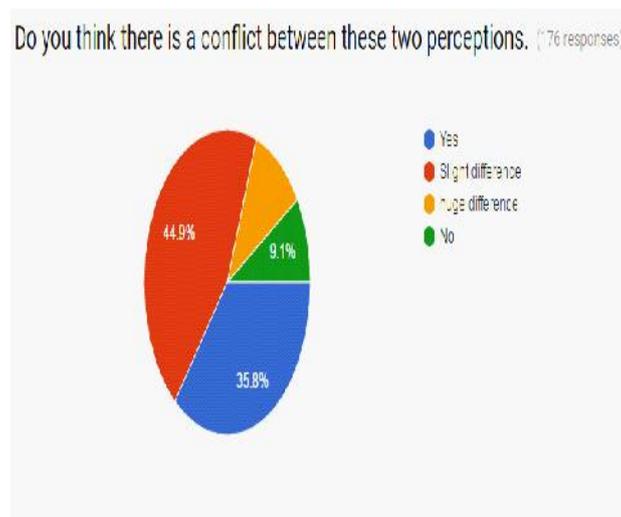


**Observation and Conclusion:-**

From the above pie chart, we observed that most of the participants from different generations agreed upon having different perception about generation gap between them and other generations. However, 14.2% participants did not think that there is a difference in perspective of different generations regarding generation gap.

From this, we can state that having different opinions about the concept of generation gap could be a major factor in creating the conflict between parents and children.

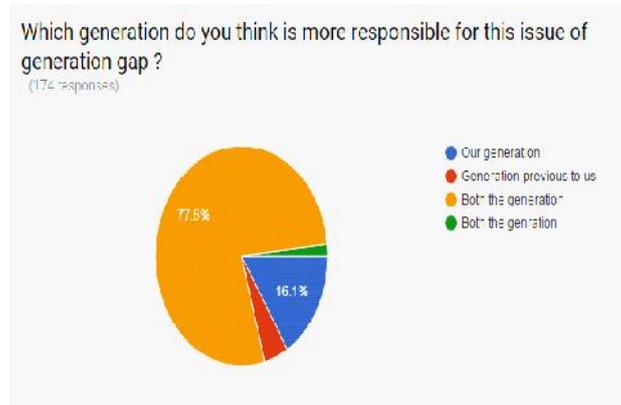
**Pie Chart 4**



**Observation and Conclusion:-**From the above pie chart, it can be observed that 35.8% participants agree that there is a conflict of perception. Majority of the participants see a slight difference in the perception of generation gap among different generations and only 10.2% participants think that the perspectives differ hugely.

From the above observation, it can be concluded that the major population sees a conflict in the concept and understanding of generation gap. There is a difference in how it is perceived based on choices and opinions.

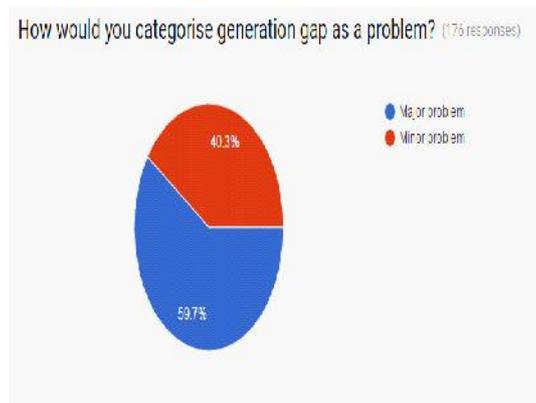
**Pie Chart5:**



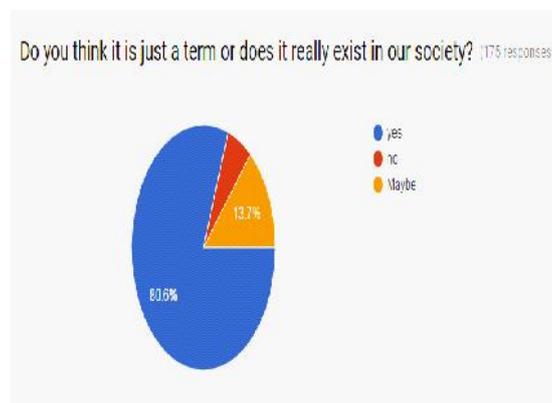
**Observation and Conclusion:-** From the above pie chart , it can be observed that 77.6% participants agreed that both the generations are equally responsible for creating this gap whereas 16.1% participants held their own generation responsible for this issue. A very small percentage of participants criticized the previous generation.

It can be concluded that the majority of the participants agree that both the generations are responsible for this issue of generation gap which shows that both the generations are ready to take responsibility of their mistakes.

**Pie Chart 6:**



**Pie Chart 7**

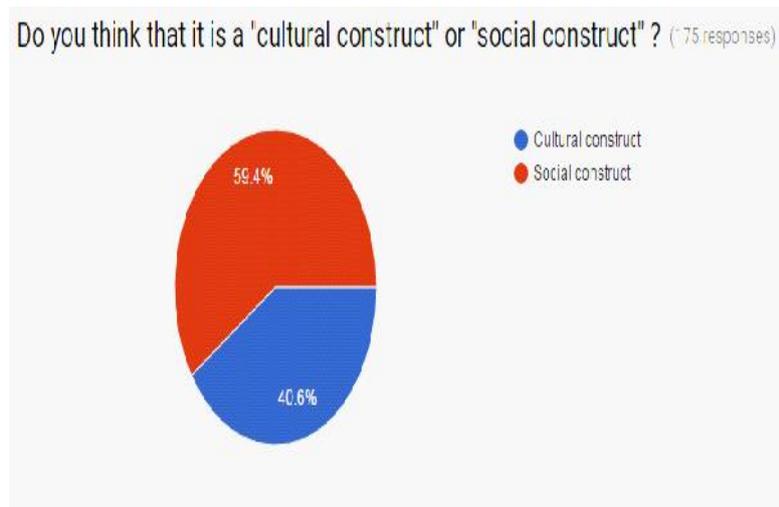


**Observation and Conclusion:-** From pie charts 6 and 7, we observe that 59.7% people agree that generation gap is a major problem of our society and also that it is not just an invented term but an actual problem which

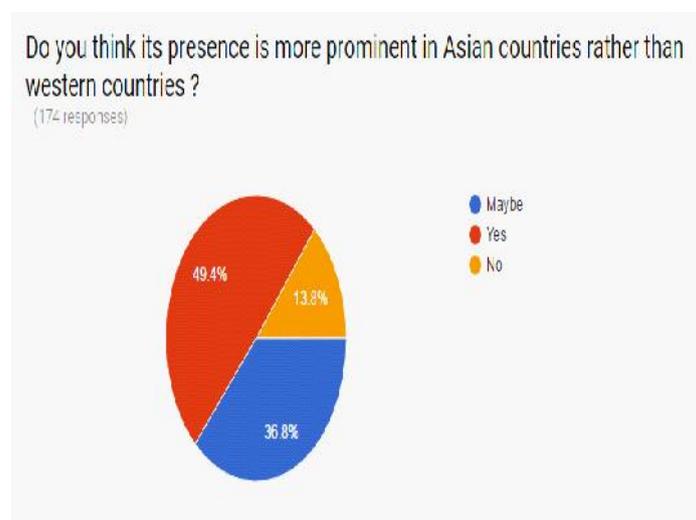
exists in our society and affects our day-to-day life. Whereas 40.3% participants do not consider it as a major issue.

It can be concluded that the society as a whole accepts that the problem of generation gap does very much exist.

**Pie Chart 8:**



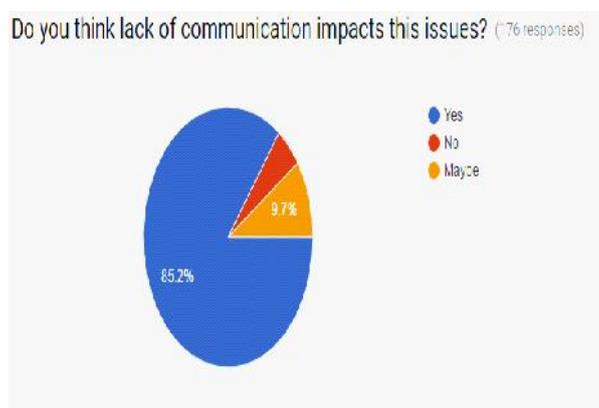
**Pie Chart 9:**



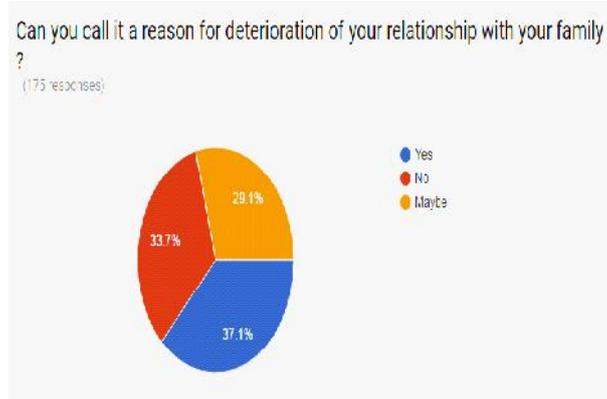
**Observation and Conclusion:-** It can be observed from pie charts 8 and 9 that 59.4% people believe that generation gap is a social construct rather than a cultural one. Also, 49.4% people agreed that the issue of generation gap is prominent more in Asian society as compared to European or western society.

It can be thus concluded that this issue is perceived more as a social construct due to social norms and societal pressures. Majority of the people agree that this problem has been created by the society rather than the culture. Although, it is observed that people also agree that the issue is more prominent in the Asian culture which can be thought as an ambivalent reaction which agrees that the issue is both created by social and cultural construct.

**Pie Chart 10:**



**Pie Chart 11:**

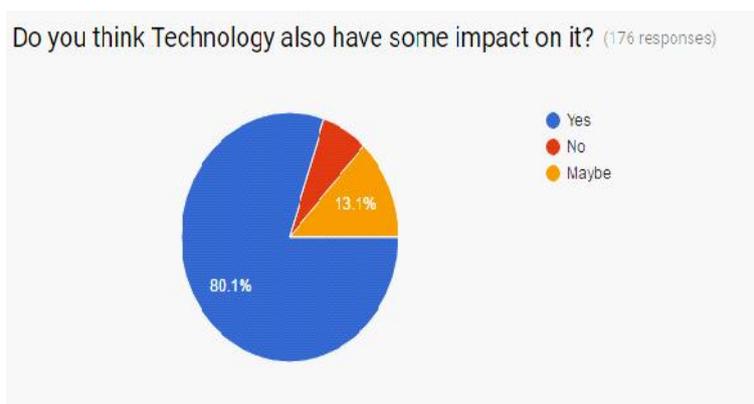


**Observation and Conclusion:**

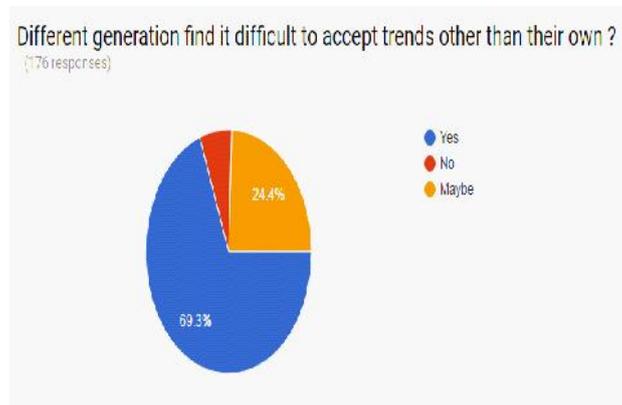
From pie charts 10 and 11, it can be observed that 85.2% people agree that lack of communication plays a major role in widening generation gap but 33.7% people do not agree that generation gap is the reason for deterioration of their relationships with their families. Though, 37.1% people agree that this issue could be the reason for familial conflicts.

This thus leadsto the conclusion that lack of communication is one of the major causes for this problem. Generation gap is considered as a reason for breaking the ties and creating conflicts in family relationships.

**PIE CHART 12:**



**Pie Chart 13:**



### **Observation and Conclusion:**

From pie charts 12 and 13, it can be observed that 80.1% people agree that technology also could be the reason for creating this gap among different generations. Also, it has been agreed upon that accepting trends of time other than their own is difficult and this also plays a role in widening of this gap.

It can be concluded that changing technologies over time as well as trends are the reasons for this gap since people find it difficult to adapt to these changes and hence fail to understand others who have been already molded to accept new trends and technologies.

### **C. Observer's Report**

After going through the survey forms and viewing the answers of the participants, it was observed that whether the participant belonged to younger generation or to an older generation, everyone seemed aware about the existence of the issue of generation gap and was ready to take the responsibility. None of the members of any generation held the other generation responsible alone.

Many of the members belonging to younger generation believe that "if both the generations take a step forward and embrace each other's perception, then a mutual understanding could be maintained that might help to resolve this problem". Also, the participants belonging to older generation were very forthcoming and agreed that it is the responsibility of older generation to bridge the communication gap among the two generations and share their life experiences with them. According to them more close interactions, discussions and proper communication will make the transition more comfortable and will fill the gap to a large extent. One of the members from the older generation stated that "humans are social creatures" and this fact has to be understood and needs to be communicated well to the new generation.

Hence, it can be said that both the generations are very optimistic towards resolving the issue and are ready to take essential steps to bridge this gap and strengthen their relationships.

### **V. RESULT**

The survey done and the research paper led to the conclusion that generation gap does exist and is a major problem of the society. From the survey it was observed that the root cause of the issue of generation gap, is lack of communication between parents and children. It is seen that human needs are insatiable and ever growing, therefore in order to maintain high standards of living both parents ought to have a job but due to this, they do not have enough time for their children, which leads to widening of this gap existing between the two generations. On the other hand children are more occupied with technology and have forgotten the importance of family life, relationship and being social. From the survey conducted it was observed that majority of the members of the older generation agreed and mentioned that parent should take some timeout for new generation and share their experiences and ups and downs of their life. Mental development and physical growth is must but they should also try to inculcate social and emotional growth in their children.

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Younger generation should be taught moral values and know strong base of family and society structures. “Humans are social creature” has to be understood and communicated to the next generations. On the other hand, it was observed from the survey that the majority of the members of the younger generation agreed and mentioned that both the generations should take a step towards embracing each other, their perception and way of living. A mutual understanding and compromise might help in resolving this matter. The survey conducted also focused on some other causes like introduction of new technologies which has been held responsible in causing isolation of the children not only from family but also from society. The older generation on the hand finds it difficult to manage and they fail to understand their children’s growing affinity towards gadgets and internet which cause arguments and conflicts in their relation. Also the survey done showed that a large group of people from different generations agree that the concept of generation gap and its side effects are more prominent in Asian societies due to strong focus on cultural and social construct rather than individualistic identity. The positive outcome of the survey was that both the generations elder and younger identified with this issue and were ready to discuss and find possible solutions to somehow reduce the effects of conflicts which arise due to generation gap.

## VI .SUMMARY

The research paper sheds light on the issues related to generation gap and its effect on major strata of our society. Although there are many problems which Indian society has been facing for several years like child labor, dowry, corruption, human trafficking. They have been addressed by great philosophers at some time or the other but due to existence of such grave issues in our society, the problem like generation gap have always been put to side lines. In modern society where people are more relying on technology for raising standard of living and are gadget freaks, they have forgotten the importance of family and social life. They are reluctant to bridge this problem of generation gap existing amongst them. It was observed through the survey conducted that maximum percentage of family relationships are deteriorating and getting worse day by day due to lack of communication and egoistic nature of family members. People believe more in keeping grudges towards each other rather than facing the reality and discussing and addressing the problems in a forgiving manner so as to find a possible solution to bridge the distance between family members.

In our research paper we have tried our best to put across various possible problems faced by people due to this issue of generation gap and with the help of statistical tools and by the analysis of the data that has been extracted from the responses filled by the people of different age groups, we have also suggested ways by which these problems can be mitigated. Our research paper gives an insight into the notion and description of *generation gap*. The purpose of writing this research paper is to understand, discuss, allure and direct reader’s attention towards the increasing grievances in familial relations that have led to widening of generation gap. After reviewing many research papers and books it is concluded upon that the understanding of various aspects of generation gap become more clear and vivid as newer technologies are taking over the society and increased workload and strain of workplaces have taken over the time of the elder generation. The purpose behind this research paper is to obtain some possible solutions to problems related to generation gap. These solutions have been covered in details in the finding observation’s section of this paper.

## VIII. Acknowledgement

We would like to express our thanks to the people who have helped us throughout our paper. We are thankful to our teacher Dr.Sharmishtha Bhattacharya for extending her never ending support in making this research paper.

A special thanks goes to all the team members who worked together with hard work and dedication in completing this paper, where each and every member of the group expressed their own interesting and innovative ideas and thoughts and made it possible to complete this paper with all accurate facts and figure. In order to give this piece of work more realistic approach we carried out a survey by preparing Google documents, which were filled by approximately two hundred people. The data from

this survey was pooled and information was used in our report by using statistical tools, in order to understand generation gap in a better way.

At last but not the least we would like to thank our friends who treasured us for our hard work and encouraged us and finally to all the people, who participated in the survey with their honest opinions and helped us to understand the issue and made carrying out the survey and write the paper till the end possible for us.

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