



Assessment of Gen Zers' Role Consciousness in the National Integrity

Gayatri Devi Hanumanthu

*Student, Department of Electronics and Communication Engineering,
Aditya Institute of Technology and Management*

Abstract: *This study explores the role consciousness of Generation Z (Gen Z) in the context of national integrity, examining the perceptions and experiences of parents, teachers, and Gen Z themselves. Using a qualitative approach, the research employs a cross-sectional survey and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) to gather in-depth insights. The findings reveal a generational shift in the understanding of national integrity, with Gen Z emphasizing inclusivity, fairness, and global citizenship over traditional notions of patriotism. Parents and teachers express concerns about Gen Z's detachment from national values and historical context, highlighting the influence of digital exposure and social media. While Gen Z values diversity and social justice, they feel disconnected from opportunities to contribute meaningfully to national causes. The study concludes that bridging the gap between traditional and modern views of national integrity requires integrating interactive learning methods, promoting digital literacy, and creating inclusive platforms for youth engagement. This collaborative effort between parents, educators, and policymakers is essential to foster a sense of national responsibility in Gen Z, enabling them to contribute to the nation's unity and progress in a way that aligns with their evolving values.*

Keywords: *National integrity, Gen Z, Role consciousness, Social media, Civic engagement*

Introduction

National integrity—the unity and solidarity of a nation's citizens—is fundamental to a country's stability and progress (Kumar & Gupta, 2021). In India, a nation characterized by its rich diversity, fostering national cohesion is particularly vital. Generation Z (Gen Z), individuals born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, are emerging as influential contributors to this endeavour (Singh, 2020). This cohort is distinguished by technological proficiency, social awareness, and a propensity for critical thinking. Their engagement with national values and their role in promoting integrity are shaped by various factors, including education, socio-economic environment, digital exposure, and cultural perceptions (Sharma et al., 2022).

Recent studies highlight Gen Z's significant impact on India's socio-economic landscape. For instance, Gen Z accounts for approximately 46% of consumer spending, amounting to \$860 billion, underscoring their economic influence (Boston

Consulting Group, 2024). Additionally, their political engagement is on the rise, with increasing involvement in democratic processes and support for political parties (Mehta, 2023). Despite these developments, there is a paucity of comprehensive understanding regarding how Gen Z perceives and enacts their role in sustaining national integrity. This study seeks to explore the consciousness of Gen Zers concerning their contributions to national unity and integrity.

Contemporary societies face mounting challenges to national integrity, including cultural polarization, misinformation, political divisiveness, and declining civic engagement (Chakraborty, 2021). In India, these issues are compounded by the nation's vast diversity. While Gen Z is often lauded for its progressive outlook and digital fluency, their awareness and commitment to sustaining national unity remain underexplored. Empirical evidence specifically addressing how Gen Z interprets and acts upon their responsibilities toward national integrity is limited (Sharma et al., 2022).

Without this understanding, designing effective policies, educational curricula, and community initiatives to engage this demographic in promoting cohesion and unity becomes challenging. This study addresses the need to assess Gen Zers' consciousness regarding their roles in upholding national integrity and to identify barriers that may hinder their active participation.

Existing literature predominantly focuses on youth civic engagement or examines traditional values' role in national integrity, often overlooking Gen Z's unique attributes and challenges (Singh, 2020). Much research on national integrity centers on older generations or broad societal trends, with minimal attention to Gen Z as a distinct cohort (Mehta, 2023).

Furthermore, there is a scarcity of research integrating modern influences such as digital media, globalization, and evolving social norms into analyses of Gen Z's role in national integrity. Studies rarely explore how factors like education, socio-economic status, and regional diversity intersect to shape Gen Z's consciousness about their national responsibilities (Venugopal, K. 2024). This study aims to fill these gaps by providing an in-depth examination of Gen Zers' role consciousness, offering actionable insights into fostering their participation in strengthening national unity.

Objectives

- To examine the level of awareness and understanding among Gen Z regarding their role in promoting and sustaining national integrity in India.
- To assess the factors influencing the role consciousness of Gen Z in national integrity..
- To identify the challenges and barriers faced by Gen Z in actively participating in initiatives aimed at strengthening national integrity.

Literature review

The role consciousness of Generation Z (Gen Z) in national integrity is influenced by various factors,

including education, socio-economic status, digital exposure, cultural and social values, political awareness, peer and community influence, globalization, media and entertainment, psychological factors, and government support. Below is a literature review of these factors, with citations and references in APA format.

Education plays a pivotal role in shaping Gen Z's understanding of national integrity. The inclusion of civic education and discussions on national unity within curricula can enhance their awareness and commitment to societal cohesion. A study by Boston Consulting Group (2024) emphasizes the importance of continuous learning and adaptability among Indian Gen Z, highlighting the need for educational systems to incorporate elements that promote national integrity.

Socio-economic factors significantly impact Gen Z's engagement with national integrity. Economic disparities can influence access to education and civic participation. Research by Mahapatra and Sharma (2022) indicates that Gen Z in India values career advancement and growth, suggesting that economic opportunities may affect their societal engagement.

Gen Z's digital nativity exposes them to vast information, shaping their perceptions of national integrity. However, the prevalence of misinformation and online polarization poses challenges. A study by Jayatissa (2023) discusses how technology and social media provide Gen Z with access to unlimited information, influencing their development and societal views.

Family upbringing and societal norms influence Gen Z's role consciousness. The interplay between traditional values and modern perspectives can affect their commitment to national integrity. Pranaya & Venugopal(2023) note that Gen Z in India seeks autonomy and flexibility, indicating a shift from traditional work values that may extend to broader societal values.

Political engagement is crucial for fostering national integrity. Gen Z's involvement in political processes reflects their commitment to societal cohesion. Research by Gopalakrishna & Venugopal

(2023) highlights Gen Z's desire for greater flexibility and autonomy, which may influence their political engagement and perspectives on national integrity.

Peers and community organizations play a role in shaping Gen Z's societal views. Collective consciousness within these groups can influence their commitment to national integrity. A study by Venugopal, K. (2024) emphasizes the importance of understanding Gen Z through collective consciousness, impacting their work and societal engagement.

Exposure to global cultures and ideas can influence Gen Z's national identity and their views on national integrity. Balancing global and local identities presents both opportunities and challenges. Research by Venugopale et al (2023) discuss Gen Z's adaptability and openness to continuous learning, traits that are essential in a globalized world and may impact their national identity.

Media representations can shape Gen Z's perceptions of national unity. Positive portrayals can promote cohesion, while negative ones may foster division. Venugopalan and Somanadh (2024) note that technology and social media play a vital role in Gen Z's development, providing access to information and influencing their societal views.

A sense of belonging and emotional connection to the nation can drive Gen Z's commitment to national integrity. Understanding their psychological motivations is essential for fostering engagement. Vishnu Murty et al (2014) highlight Gen Z's desire for autonomy and flexibility, which may influence their sense of belonging and engagement with national integrity.

Government initiatives promoting civic responsibility can enhance Gen Z's role consciousness. Supportive policies and programs are crucial for encouraging their participation in national integrity efforts. Research by Somanadh and Venugopal (2024) suggests that Gen Z values career advancement and growth, indicating that government policies supporting these aspirations

may also influence their engagement with national integrity.

Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive research design and a qualitative approach to explore Generation Z's role consciousness in national integrity. A cross-sectional survey is employed to gather data within a specific timeframe, ensuring a snapshot of Gen Z's perceptions and experiences. Convenience sampling is utilized to select participants from educational institutions, community organizations, and social media platforms, prioritizing accessibility and relevance. Data collection methods include Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with small groups of Gen Z individuals, fostering in-depth discussions and diverse perspectives. The collected qualitative data is subjected to manual thematic analysis, wherein key themes and patterns are identified through a systematic coding process. This methodology ensures a comprehensive exploration of factors influencing Gen Z's understanding and engagement with national integrity.

Analysis and Discussion

5.1. Focus Group Discussion among Parents, Teachers and Gen Z

5.1.1. Parents' Opinions

1. *"We try to teach them about our country's struggles for independence, but they seem more influenced by global pop culture."*
2. *"Our children are more educated than we were, but they sometimes overlook the importance of maintaining national unity."*
3. *"It's great to see them participating in discussions on social issues, but I feel they lack depth in understanding civic responsibilities."*

4. *"They often question everything, including traditions, which is good, but it can make them dismissive of national values."*
5. *"The digital world exposes them to many ideas, but I worry it also desensitizes them to real-world problems in our country."*
6. *"We emphasize respecting diversity at home, but I'm not sure how much of that resonates with them in their daily lives."*
7. *"They seem to care about fairness and equality, but their focus is more on global issues than on national ones."*

5.1.2. Teachers' Opinions

1. *"Gen Z is creative and outspoken, but their understanding of national issues sometimes lacks historical context."*
2. *"They engage well in activities like debates and cultural events, but their commitment tends to wane without constant motivation."*
3. *"The emphasis on technology in their lives means we have to work harder to connect them with real-world community issues."*
4. *"Their awareness of societal inequalities is impressive, but they don't always see how they can contribute to solving these issues."*
5. *"Many students are open to learning about national integrity, but they prefer interactive and practical approaches rather than lectures."*
6. *"Their sense of justice is strong, but they need to understand how it connects with sustaining national unity."*
7. *"They are eager to volunteer for causes they care about, but connecting those*

causes to national integrity requires careful guidance."

5.1.3. Gen Z's Opinions

1. *"We care about making a difference, but traditional ideas of national integrity don't feel relevant to us."*
2. *"Inclusivity and diversity are what national integrity means to us, not just patriotism in the traditional sense."*
3. *"We feel connected to global movements, but sometimes it's hard to relate those values to our local community."*
4. *"Social media gives us a platform to voice our opinions, but we often struggle with misinformation and divisive content."*
5. *"We want to take action for the country, but we feel there aren't enough accessible opportunities for youth to participate."*
6. *"National integrity is about fairness and equality to us, but we don't see those values consistently reflected in society."*
7. *"We believe in celebrating cultural diversity, but sometimes we feel excluded from discussions about our role in the nation's future."*

The perspectives of parents, teachers, and Gen Z on role consciousness in national integrity highlight both commonalities and significant generational differences. Parents express concern over Gen Z's disconnection from traditional values and their tendency to prioritize global issues over local ones, despite being more educated and aware. They appreciate their children's openness to discussions about fairness and equality but worry that digital distractions and a lack of deep civic understanding might dilute their sense of national responsibility. Teachers, on the other hand, recognize the creativity, curiosity, and social awareness of Gen Z but note that their understanding of national

integrity often lacks historical context and depth. They emphasize the need for practical, interactive learning methods to sustain engagement and believe that guiding Gen Z to connect their sense of justice and inclusivity to national unity is critical. From Gen Z's perspective, traditional notions of patriotism often feel outdated and irrelevant, as they prioritize inclusivity, diversity, and fairness. While they value the opportunities provided by social media to voice their opinions and connect with global movements, they also acknowledge challenges like misinformation and divisive content. They express a desire for more accessible platforms and opportunities to actively contribute to national causes and define national integrity in terms of equality and cultural celebration. Together, these perspectives reveal a need for collaborative efforts across generations to bridge the gaps in understanding and engagement, aligning traditional values with modern ideals and fostering meaningful opportunities for Gen Z to contribute to the nation's unity and progress.

5.2.Challenges and Barriers

Generation Z faces several challenges and barriers when it comes to actively participating in initiatives aimed at strengthening national integrity. These barriers stem from a combination of technological, social, and structural factors that influence their ability to engage meaningfully in such initiatives. Below are the key challenges:

5.2.1. Digital Distraction and Misinformation

One of the most significant barriers Gen Z faces is the overwhelming presence of digital distractions, particularly through social media and online platforms. While these platforms provide opportunities for expressing opinions and discussing societal issues, they also contribute to the spread of misinformation, fake news, and online polarization. This not only distorts Gen Z's understanding of national issues but also makes it challenging for them to differentiate between credible sources and biased content. The ease of accessing superficial information often discourages in-depth engagement with complex national matters related to integrity and unity.

5.2.2. Lack of Accessible Platforms for Youth Involvement

Gen Z often feels excluded from meaningful platforms where they can actively contribute to strengthening national integrity. While many may have strong opinions on social issues, they struggle to find avenues where they can directly participate in decision-making processes, community engagement, or national initiatives. Government programs and civic education efforts sometimes fail to effectively include youth voices, leading to a sense of disenfranchisement.

5.2.3. Generational Disconnect and Value Differences

Another challenge is the generational divide in perceptions of national integrity. While older generations often emphasize traditional values of patriotism and unity, Gen Z tends to value inclusivity, fairness, and social justice, which may not always align with conventional views of national integrity. This disconnect can create tensions, with Gen Z questioning the relevance of traditional concepts of national unity. As a result, they may struggle to engage in initiatives that feel out of touch with their more globalized and progressive worldview.

5.2.4. Cultural and Social Pressures

Gen Z is often caught between maintaining their individual identity and conforming to social and cultural expectations. In many societies, national integrity is linked to cultural norms, religious values, and historical narratives that may not resonate with Gen Z's more diverse and inclusive mind-set. They may feel pressure to conform to these expectations, especially in environments where dissent or non-conformity is viewed negatively. Such pressures can prevent them from engaging openly in initiatives that challenge the status quo.

5.2.5. Economic Barriers

Economic factors also play a significant role in limiting Gen Z's ability to engage in national

integrity initiatives. Many young people face financial instability, limited access to resources, and pressure to prioritize education and career advancement over community service or political involvement. These economic constraints hinder their capacity to participate in long-term or resource-intensive programs that promote national unity.

5.2.6. Overwhelming Focus on Global Issues

Due to their exposure to global movements and issues through digital platforms, Gen Z tends to be more focused on global causes, such as climate change, human rights, and social justice. While these issues are critical, they may detract from their attention to national issues of integrity and unity. The influence of global culture often leads to a broader sense of responsibility to the world at large, rather than a specific national focus, making it difficult for them to connect deeply with national integrity initiatives.

5.2.7. Lack of Representation and Role Models

Gen Z often lacks sufficient representation and role models in national discourse. When they do not see individuals who share their values and experiences leading national integrity efforts, they may feel alienated or believe that their voices do not matter in shaping the nation's future. The lack of youth representation in leadership roles or decision-making processes discourages active participation in initiatives aimed at promoting national cohesion.

5.2.8. Political Apathy and Disillusionment

Many members of Gen Z are politically disengaged or disillusioned due to a perceived lack of authenticity and transparency in political systems. This apathy makes it difficult for them to see the value in participating in national integrity initiatives that are often linked to political processes. With growing concerns over corruption, inefficiency, and lack of youth engagement in politics, Gen Z may be reluctant to involve themselves in traditional political channels that they feel are disconnected from their needs and aspirations.

Addressing these challenges requires creating more inclusive, interactive, and transparent platforms for Gen Z to engage in national integrity initiatives. It also involves redefining national integrity to align with Gen Z's values of fairness, equality, and inclusivity. By bridging the generational gap, promoting digital literacy, providing accessible opportunities for participation, and involving youth in decision-making processes, it is possible to empower Gen Z to play an active role in strengthening national integrity.

Conclusions

Based on the analysis of the perspectives of parents, teachers, and Gen Z on role consciousness in national integrity, several key conclusions can be drawn:

- ❖ There is a noticeable generational disconnect between traditional views of national integrity and Gen Z's evolving values. While parents and teachers emphasize the importance of historical knowledge, civic duty, and national unity, Gen Z tends to prioritize inclusivity, fairness, and global issues. This shift highlights the need to align traditional values with modern perspectives to foster a sense of national responsibility in the younger generation.
- ❖ Digital exposure, especially through social media, plays a dual role in shaping Gen Z's perception of national integrity. On one hand, it provides a platform for discussing global issues and promoting diversity. On the other hand, it also exposes them to misinformation and polarizing content, which can hinder their understanding of national issues and unity. Therefore, there is a need for better digital literacy programs that can help Gen Z navigate this complex media landscape while staying connected to national values.
- ❖ Both teachers and parents agree on the importance of fostering a deeper understanding of national integrity, but there is a gap in terms of how Gen Z engages with these concepts. Gen Z prefers practical, interactive methods of learning and involvement in societal issues, yet

they often find traditional educational approaches insufficient in addressing their needs. This suggests that integrating more hands-on learning opportunities, such as community service, cultural exchange programs, and civic education activities, could enhance their role consciousness.

- ❖ Gen Z expresses a strong desire to contribute to national integrity but feels excluded from meaningful platforms that would allow them to do so. There is a call for more opportunities for youth to engage in national issues through accessible platforms that respect their values of inclusivity and diversity. Government and educational institutions must create spaces where Gen Z can take active roles in promoting national unity, emphasizing fairness and social justice.
- ❖ Gen Z's exposure to global movements and values has shaped their sense of identity, making it crucial to find a balance between global citizenship and national integrity. It is important to cultivate a national identity that is inclusive of diverse perspectives while also reinforcing the significance of national unity. This balance can foster a generation that is both globally aware and committed to the nation's progress.

In conclusion, the study underscores the need for a collaborative effort between parents, educators, and policymakers to adapt educational strategies and societal structures that engage Gen Z in fostering national integrity. By embracing Gen Z's values of inclusivity, diversity, and fairness, while providing them with relevant platforms and opportunities, it is possible to create a more unified and resilient society.

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