

Not meant to be partners for life

NO HAPPILY EVER AFTER For the young, marriage is not a promise for life and cheating is premissible but family continues to be an anchor

The latest Youth Survey by HT and MaRS shows marriage is not what it used to be. Only 22.4% of the men and 19.2% of the women polled think their current relationship will go the distance. More than half the men, 51.6%, think it will not, though the women naysayers are a little less, at 44.2%.

The institution of family remains largely intact, with 74% of the men and 72% of the women saying their relationship with parents is either "close" or "very close".

Friends come a distant second. Only 36% of the men and women say they are either "close" or "very close" to their best friends.

Perhaps the reasons behind the attitude to marriage were revealed when the respondents were asked if they will consider sex before marriage, or think of living together before taking the plunge. Only 43.6% of the men and 44.2% of the women were against sex before marriage, leaving the majority either in favour of it, or uncertain.

More than half of the respondents from both genders were either in favour of living together or undecided. Only 46.3% of the men and 48.9% of the women said no to it.

Nearly half of both genders will either be happy to cheat on their partner, or have an open mind about it, if there was no fear of getting caught. Only 53.9% of the men and 49.9% of the women said they were certain they will not. The two old bugbears of Indian society — caste and homosexuality — remain bugbears.

The survey revealed that more than half of the men, 55%, do not approve of inter-caste marriage, and more than 60% look down on homosexuality. It is not much different with women: about 57% do not approve of inter-caste marriage and nearly 65% frown upon homosexuality.

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YOUTH SURVEY 2016

TOMORROW:
Society

LIVE AND LET LIVE

Homosexuals expected to suffer for loving someone

NEWDELHI: So your dog died last night. Your boss caught you taking a nap at work. Then you heard it on the news that a sexist, xenophobic orange rice puff has become the leader of the free world. To try to make things better, you go to the movies but get beaten up by some proud patriots for not standing up for the national anthem.

But once you get home, the one you love takes you in their arms. The pain vanishes and the suffering goes away. Now imagine not being allowed that either. Not being allowed love. Has to be the worst thing, right?

For millions of homosexuals across the country, it is this very right we take for granted that is frowned upon, hated and snatched away, leaving them to seek out love in fearful secrecy.

This is what the lives of millions of homosexuals in the country look like or rather, what the law and society would have it look like.

Homosexuals are expected to suffer for the crime of having loved someone they shouldn't. And that is just the beginning. Had it only been their love for someone from the opposite sex — the "normal" choice — their lives would be made immortal as enchanting stories of unrequited love.

But not in the world we live in. Here they are branded unnatural, an anomaly, a threat, an abomination. I do not relate to the 45% respondents in the HT-MaRS Youth Survey 2016 who said

YES
Homosexuals have the right to fall in love
SOUMYA SRIVASTAVA

they don't approve of homosexuality. Another 28% said they can't say where they stand on this issue. Let's take it as a "no". What exactly is it that makes India's young object to homosexuality?

Is it the fear they may corrupt others with their "ungodly" ways? Is it the belief that getting married or even just having sex is the right of only heterosexual couples? Or is it simply the fear of the unknown?

It is perhaps all of these, but only the last one allows any room for change and debate.

Homophobia and a lot of other problems that people have with other people usually stem out of sheer ignorance.

We can ward off so much hatred from this world only if each one of us realised this: They too are people, just like me. They have a family, some hope, some failures, someone they love and someone who loves them back, and a complex life.

Like you, they also deserve to be happy and live the way they want to. And if it is not hurting you or anyone else, why not just let them be.

Soumya Srivastava is an entertainment journalist. When she is not beating stress with adult colouring books, she loves to binge on Netflix or take pictures of nice things.

DO YOU APPROVE OF HOMOSEXUALITY?
35% YES
39.3% of male respondents said that they approved of homosexuality. While 45% of the total respondents said they did not approve of it, 28% were undecided about it.

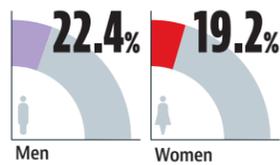
WILL YOU CHEAT ON YOUR PARTNER IF THERE IS NO FEAR OF GETTING CAUGHT?
54% NO
49.9% of women respondents said they will not cheat on their partners even if there was no fear of getting caught.

Homophobia, like a lot of other problems, stems from ignorance

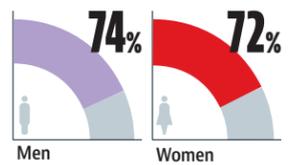
We live in a morally bankrupt world

COMMITMENT QUOTIENT

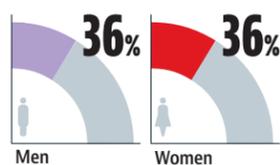
THINK THEIR CURRENT RELATIONSHIP WILL GO THE DISTANCE



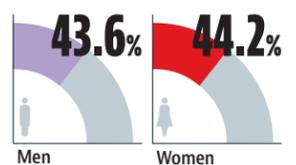
ARE 'CLOSE' OR 'VERY CLOSE' TO THEIR PARENTS



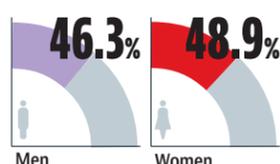
ARE EITHER 'CLOSE' OR 'VERY CLOSE' TO BEST FRIENDS



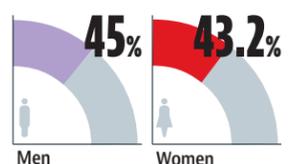
ARE AGAINST SEX BEFORE MARRIAGE



ARE AGAINST LIVING TOGETHER BEFORE MARRIAGE



APPROVE OF INTER-CASTE MARRIAGE

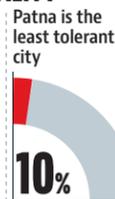


HOMOSEXUALITY

Chandigarh is the most tolerant city

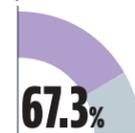


Patna is the least tolerant city



SEX BEFORE MARRIAGE

Delhi has most takers for premarital sex



Lucknow is least open to the idea



METHODOLOGY: India Youth Survey 2016 was carried out by MaRS (Monitoring and Research Systems) in 15 state capitals and major towns in India. Target respondents were both male and female from age groups 18-21 years and 22-25 years, belonging to households with durable ownership of TV, refrigerator and at least one of: car, two wheeler, home computer/laptop, and washing machine. The respondent was either currently a student of undergraduate or above or employed with education graduate or above and a regular user of internet on the smart phone. Total sample size was 5200 and survey was carried out from November 3 to November 20, 2016.

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For full data, interactive graphics, voices, video features and opinion poll, log on to: www.hindustantimes.com/youthsurvey2016

GAME OF ONE-UPMANSHIP

Cheating doesn't have to be just physical or emotional

NEWDELHI: The most worrying part about this survey is not that there are folks who have no qualms in admitting that cheating in a relationship does not bother them (22%), but the stunning number of people who said "can't say" (26%) when they had the opportunity to say "no".

To be clear: None of the respondents in the HT-MaRS Youth Survey 2016 were under any oath.

They could have lied, if only for their own satisfaction. But for some incomprehensible reason, instead of crying out in disgust and dismissing the idea without second thought, they said they'd think about it, which, to any rational mind, is basically a "yes".

There's a temptation to include these men and women in the same pile of sub-human garbage that walks the earth pretending to be sentient, proudly boasting about the several partners they're with at any given moment like a badge of honour. But then, we must rise above this lot, mustn't we?

Agreed, there is a thrill in committing a forbidden act, especially when the consequences of such an act are removed from the table, but that's fine as long as it remains victimless.

But can you see the cruel irony in being honest about your nonchalant attitude towards cheating?

Perhaps it's a result of the environment in which they fester, but these people aren't looking for excuses, they aren't looking for

NO
Cheating on your partner is not a matter of pride
ROHAN NAAHAR

sympathy. They are, instead, like so many sociopaths out there, looking for attention. It's their lack of self-worth, their absent self-esteem, their pathetic, lonely existence that drives them to do this, and nothing else.

But betrayals come in many forms — cheating doesn't have to be physical; not emotional either. With time, there comes jealousy, and there isn't a force more destructive than it.

It can drive the sanest minds into doing the most terrible things, often to balance an arbitrary, invisible status quo. In this game of one-upmanship, it is the weakest who tend to submit to their worst tendencies.

And every person knows that pushed far enough, they are capable of barbaric behaviour, but somehow, even in this morally bankrupt world that we live in, it's somewhat a miracle that there aren't more people who don't have complete meltdowns every day.

There are still people keeping it together. Hurray! Shall we pat our back now? Shall we high-five for not being absolute jerks every minute of our waking lives? Are we supposed to applaud these "can't say" losers for their honesty?

If you have to think about it then you're one of them.

Rohan Naahar isn't a behavioural psychologist. He is a graduate in English literature and postgraduate in journalism.

RAJ K RAJ/HT PHOTO

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WHAT IS YOUNG INDIA'S TAKE ON CHEATING?

Read how the youth feels about relationships, and other such themes

In Hindustan Times from December 19-25



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YOUTH SURVEY 2016

Freedom fans will rebel for a reason

BREAK FREE The youth today is prepared to rebel against social norms when their freedom is in question. Not many, however, feel that they should take the lead in bringing change

The battle of the youth against society rages on, as does the battle of generations. An overwhelming 84.1% of the men in the latest Youth Survey by HT and MaRS say they want to rebel against society. The women are not to be left behind: 80.8% say they want to break out and rebel. The survey covered 5,460 respondents of 18 to 25 years, divided equally between men and women, in 15 cities and towns. Each respondent is an undergraduate student or higher, or employed with at least a bachelors degree.

All of them use the mobile phone, internet, and social networking sites. The respondents are not rebels without a cause. The largest number among them — nearly half of both men and women — believe there are too many rules that curb their freedom. More than half from each gender —

54.1% men and 56.3% women — think of society as either someone to either compete with or ignore.

Not surprisingly, only about a quarter of the respondents believe society is run equally by the young and old. In a classic example of conflict in the mind, the survey shows the percentage believing society is run by adults is about the same as the percentage that says it is run by the youth.

A quarter says it is run by both equally. To add to the conflict, nearly 60% of the men and more than 65% of women do not think that young people should take the lead in changing society.



TOMORROW: Start-ups

CHANGE THAT MATTERS

We undermine power of youngsters to lead

NEW DELHI: After a month into the Teach for India fellowship, Gitesh entered my class for the first time. During one of our classroom sessions, he spoke about spaceships and aliens. Gitesh's mother remarried after her husband died, and left her two children with their old grandmother.

He's bright, empathetic and smart. He has to help with the household chores, but he has never missed studying for a test or finishing his homework. He has very little but he's always ready to share it with the other children in his class. He makes me want to give my best every single day in the class.

That a 9-year-old child can inspire me — a 24-year-old — is amazing. This makes me wonder why we undermine the power of children, of youngsters, to inspire, to lead. It makes me wonder why we are so uncomfortable with youngsters taking up leadership roles.

I don't agree with 63% of respondents to the HT-MaRS Youth Survey 2016 who said they disagreed with the notion that India's youth should play a leading role in changing the society.

Is it the pedantic nature of knowledge that we receive at school which make us believe that a leader is only a person with power, or somebody famous. Leaders are people who lay the ground work for others' success, who change mind sets, however little that might be.

Take any young change agent and you will realise that they are as effective as

YES

Youngsters can be agents of change
VIDDHI ARORA

any seasoned leader. Malala Yousafzai, the Pakistani Nobel prize winner whose tireless fight for women's education, for instance, is recognised all over the world.

Brazilian teenager Rene Silva, who started a newspaper at the age of 11 and wrote a book when only 19 years old, is effectively changing the negative stereotype against the Favela community in his country.

Closer home, we have Anshu Gupta who started Goonj in his 20s after quitting a job in a multinational company, and Jai Mishra, a mechanical engineer who decided to join Teach for India instead of a high paying job.

With the changing education landscape in the country, I think we are providing our children with the necessary skill set to lead and bring about a change. However, we get too intimidated by the creativity, innovation and individuality of the youngsters because they are radically different from the way we perceive everything around us.

They bring fresh ideas and different perspectives. We just have to move away from our conventional thought process, trust their ability and insight, and give them an opportunity because different doesn't mean wrong, does it?

A Teach for India fellow, Viddhi Arora is a firm believer that change starts from home. A Masters in Literature, she loves to read in her free time.

DO YOU THINK YOUNG PEOPLE SHOULD TAKE THE LEAD IN CHANGING SOCIETY?

63%
NO

Among the male respondents, 59.5% do not think young people should take the lead in changing society. Among women, 66.4% do not agree.

WILL YOU FIGHT FOR A CAUSE EVEN IF IT CAUSED YOU UNPOPULAR?

58%
YES

Among the male respondents 57.5% said they will fight for a cause even at the cost of becoming unpopular. Women respondents also agreed with this at 57.7%.

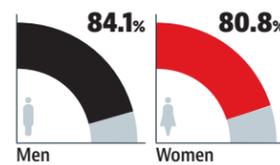
Youth can be a great source of inspiration



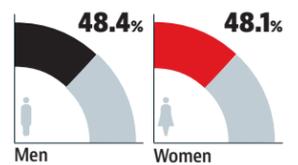
RAJ K RAJ / HT PHOTO

WINDS OF CHANGE

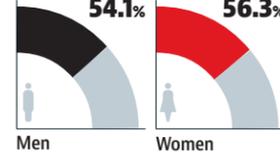
WANT TO REBEL AGAINST THE SOCIETY



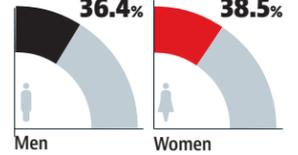
FEEL THERE ARE TOO MANY RULES, AND DO'S AND DON'TS THAT CURB THEIR FREEDOM



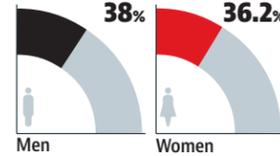
SEE SOCIETY AS SOMEONE TO COMPETE WITH OR IGNORE



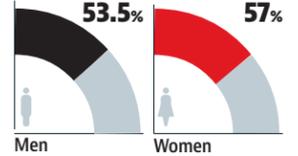
FEEL SOCIETY IS RULED MAINLY BY ADULTS



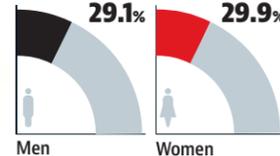
FEEL SOCIETY IS RULED MAINLY BY YOUNGSTERS



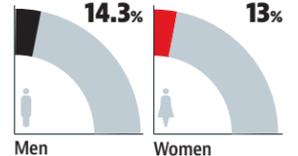
WRITE ON SOCIAL MEDIA TO ENSURE WOMEN'S SAFETY



HAVE TAKEN PART IN STREET PROTEST FOR WOMEN'S SAFETY



HAVE FRIENDS WHO HAVE DONE VOLUNTARY WORK



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PUSHING BOUNDARIES

People who stand for a cause choose struggle

NEW DELHI: Fighting for a cause sounds way fancier in debates, discussions, protests and comment pieces than it actually is in real life. Because, more often than not, the real deal is raw — an endless and unsavoury struggle, full of ugly confrontations, that ostracises all those who dare to take up the cudgels for something that matters.

Despite the pitfalls, most of us, at some point in our lives, do invariably find the strength to stand up for a cause.

Simply because we all believe in certain values — no matter how varied — that drive our everyday actions.

Also, because taking up a cause gives us a sense of purpose larger and infinitely more meaningful than our insignificant narcissistic selves.

Would the Indian youth fight it out for something that they believe in strongly, even if it risks their carefully constructed social image? According to the HT-MaRS Youth Survey this year, 58% said that they would.

Would I? Yes. Have I? Yes. Would I continue to even when I am no longer young? Yes again.

Coming from a close-knit family, the first thing my father ever asked of me was to live with him for as long as possible. Doesn't sound like a big deal, does it? Still, I moved miles away to study in a metropolis where I knew nothing and no one. To say that he did not approve of it would be quite an understatement.

NO

I will not play by the rulebook
SNEHA BENGANI

However, little did I know then that my moving away would initiate a cycle of never-ending struggle in my life.

First, it was my determination to live independently, then the choice of my profession and now not wanting to get tied in marriage as per the conventions of those around me.

Though still uneasy about it, I am painfully aware that these minor mutinies would not end here.

I am often told by people that I am too strong headed, too ambitious, too much of a rebel and someone who deliberately wants a difficult life.

I am only 24 years old and half of my relatives and family members already think I don't want to get married — ever. One of my cousins even causally asked one day if I was actually interested in men at all. You know why? Because I have a job I love and have no intention of giving it up for anything. Because I put my career before men and most other things that people seem to care about. Also because, I refuse to play by the rulebook of the society in which we live.

I did not set out to be a rebel. However, I did not set out to please anyone either. But if doing things that I believe in, and doing them when I want to, makes me unpopular, then so be it.

Sneha Bengani believes in discipline and hard work but does not understand rules. She lives off books, films and the belief that anything is possible.



ACCEPTANCE OR DENIAL

Read how the youth feels about homosexuality, and other such themes

In Hindustan Times from December 19-25



The start-up story doesn't fire youth

PICTURE IMPERFECT The young are not enthused by the start-up revolution yet they dream of setting up one themselves in the future

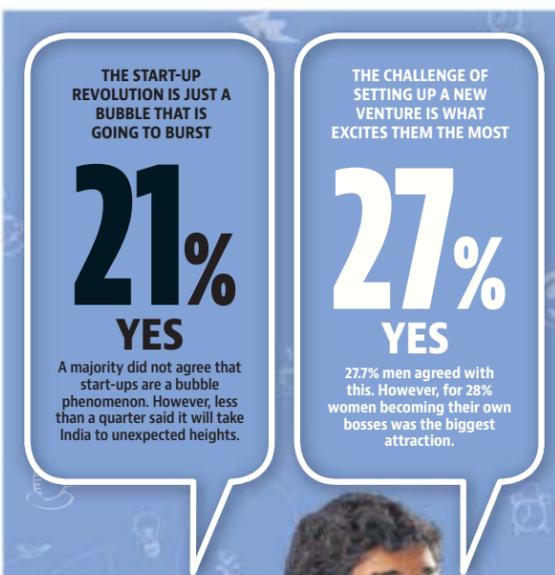
The young people do not seem to be fascinated anymore with the start-up revolution. The reason may be that the poster boys of Indian start-ups have not had a grand time of late, with valuations falling and layoffs becoming a reality.

In the latest Youth Survey by HT and MaRS, only 21.2% men and 18.5% women say start-ups are a revolution that will take the country to unexpected heights. About as many—20.8% men and 21.2% women—say it is a bubble that is going to burst.

A much higher percentage from both the genders—58% men and 60.3% women—say the country will gain from the start-up revolution, but much less than expected. And a sizeable percentage is left cold by the start-up revolution. As many as 28.8% of the men and 31.8% of the women say it does not excite them at all.

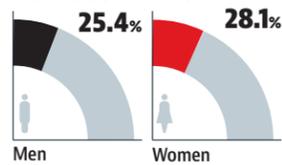
Still, in a bit of a surprise, 40.7% of the men say they have the desire to set up a start-up in the near future, and 37.9% of them say they are open to working with a start-up. Fewer women are as enthusiastic: only 28.4% say they have the desire to set up a start-up in the near future, and 27.7% say they are open to working with one. In fact, 55.8% of the men and 55.3% of the women say they have a good idea for a start-up.

The idea that excites the largest percentage of respondents—27%—about start-ups is the learning and challenge of starting a new business. Next comes the idea of being your own boss, which excites 25.4 of the men and 28.1% of the women. As many as 21.6% of all respondents are drawn to the thrill of trying out a new and innovative idea, and 8.9% like the opportunity to do whatever they want for a living. A surprisingly small percentage—7.9%—thinks of start-ups as a way to make more money.

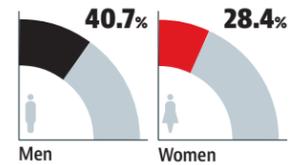


BUBBLE OR BOOM?

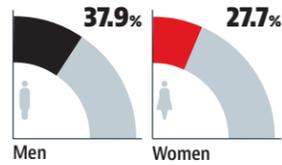
SAY A CHANCE TO BE THEIR OWN BOSS IS WHAT EXCITES THEM MOST ABOUT START-UPS



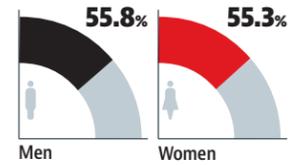
WANT TO SET UP A START-UP IN THE NEAR FUTURE



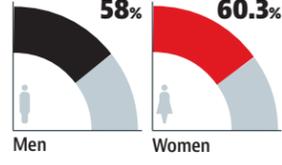
SAY THEY ARE OPEN TO WORKING WITH A START-UP



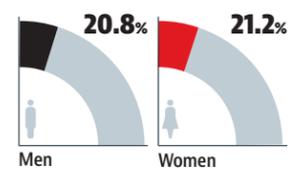
CLAIM HAVE A GOOD IDEA FOR A START-UP



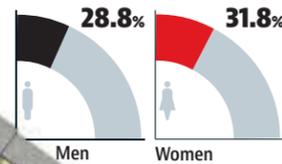
FEEL INDIA WILL GAIN FROM THE REVOLUTION, BUT DON'T EXPECT MUCH FROM IT



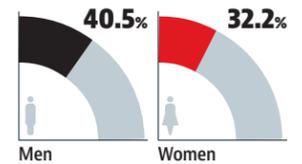
SAY IT IS A BUBBLE THAT IS GOING TO BURST



SAY THE START-UP REVOLUTION DOES NOT EXCITE THEM AT ALL



FEEL START-UPS ARE ONLY RESTRICTED TO METRO CITIES



METHODOLOGY: India Youth Survey 2016 was carried out by MaRS in 15 state capitals and major towns in India. Target respondents were both male and female from age groups 18-21 years and 22-25 years. The respondent was either currently a student of undergraduate or above or employed with education graduate or above and a regular user of internet on the smart phone. Total sample size was 5200 and survey was carried out from November 3 to November 20, 2016.

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TOMORROW:
Homeland

SIMPLIFYING LIVES

The start-up revolution will fulfil expectations

NEW DELHI: On a typical weekend, I book a movie ticket through BookMyShow, Ola my way to the theatre, order groceries on Grofers, and eat in through Zomato for which I pay via Paytm. I even found my Zumba class on UrbanClap.

It is no secret that start-ups have forever changed the face of how we avail day-to-day services, gradually transitioning them from the manual to the digital. Although the entrepreneurship bug bit India a little late, it is now here to stay.

However, since the start-up culture has been adequately talked about for almost a decade now, the novelty is wearing off, with some closely scrutinising its growth and grimly predicting that the start-up bubble will soon burst.

Figures from the HT-MaRS Youth Survey 2016 suggest a gloomy picture—21% said it is a bubble which is going to burst soon, 59% said we will gain a lot, but don't expect anything big from it. Only about 20% in the survey said the revolution will take India to an unexpected high. I beg to differ.

True, the start-up revolution is the new buzzword, but it isn't just about replacing formal attire with shorts, chairs with bean bags, or food with beer. Having been a part of a start-up and seen it grow in real time, I can say this with conviction: This revolution goes beyond conventional practices, and influences both the society and the economy.

The basic concept behind start-ups is

NO
It's not just about bean bags and beer
BHAVIKA BHUWALKA

simplifying lives, and this is the nucleus of the revolution. Since start-ups stem from the need to create a solution first (and make money later), it is only fair that we provide them with the space and resources to grow, without being pre-emptive about their failure. The start-up revolution will surely fulfil expectations, if not exceed them.

To my mind, those who oppose newer business practices simply can't accept the idea of being successful along with keeping employees happy. Offering perks sounds like an unnecessary expense to them. It is important to come to terms with the fact that start-ups have and will continue to revolutionise how businesses are run.

There is no good reason to not trust the younger generation with their ways, as long as they have their head in the game.

I remember a distant relative once mockingly commenting, "I see your start-up is trying hard to be like Google." I say why not? Don't be afraid to inculcate better office culture, don't be afraid to be the game-changer, and don't be afraid to make your employees happy.

Bhavika Bhuwalka left her full-time job at a cool startup to pursue her love for writing and travelling. She claims to have a wide circle of friends, but is often found talking to herself.



RAJ K RAJ/HT PHOTO

TO STRIVE, TO SEEK

A new business takes much more than just a good idea

NEW DELHI: Not all of us are Isaac Newtons or Albert Einsteins, but there's something about the 20s which sets this decade of life apart.

The prime skill set at this age, other than physical agility and the ability to bear excruciatingly long working hours, is the mental capability to try out many solutions, fail, and try again. It's the fearlessness of today's fresh-out-of-college graduates, and an experiment-loving attitude, which has brought about an enormous culture shift.

Starting a business takes a rough sense of people's needs, an idea that satisfies those needs, the money to set up the business, and a team to work tirelessly on making it click and expand.

Respondents of the HT-MaRS Youth Survey 2016 echo the sentiment: 27% of youngsters in India said going through the challenge of starting a new business is what excites them most about start-ups, followed by being your own boss (26.8%), the thrill of experimenting with new ideas (22%), an opportunity to do whatever you want (9%) and making more money (8%).

Sustaining a new business takes much more than a just having a good idea. A poorly executed clever idea is a bad idea overall. A well executed, but common idea, will not attract business. It takes a perfectly executed idea, by the perfectly devoted team to finally make a Google or an Apple.

YES
The idea of having a start-up excites me
SAKSHAM SRIVASTAVA

Yes, it takes patience. I've spent more than two years working for a startup. I started with teaching students all across north India (Kashmir, Himachal, UP and Bihar). These days I spend most of my time training new teachers and grooming young managers.

One of the most exciting workdays I've had in these two years involved carrying a laptop and a projector in a horse-cart to a school in a small town, to conduct a class for high school students in a district 40 kilometers from the Line of Control (LoC) in Kashmir.

The one learning that excites me more than anything else about having spent a couple of years in a start-up is: Stay Hungry Stay Foolish. People five years younger to you could help you improve the way you work.

An entrepreneurial mindset doesn't just mean having bright ideas—it also means having an open mind to trying out even the seemingly bad ones.

You need to have experienced a certain amount of chaos to be able to confidently take on more.

The idea of facing such challenges and picking up this set of skills is what excites me about being part of an entrepreneurial attempt to solve a problem.

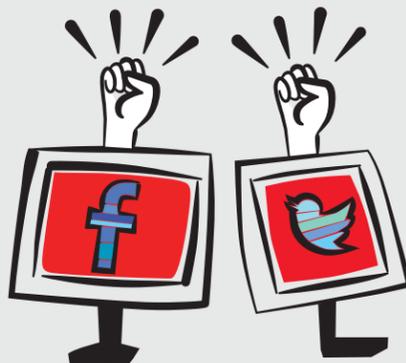
A civil engineer from IIT Kanpur and MBA from IIM Kozhikode, Saksham Srivastava is currently with Avani Learning Centres in Delhi. The organisation teaches Maths and Science to underprivileged kids



ARMCHAIR ACTIVISM OR REAL PROTEST?

Read how the youth feels about dissent

In Hindustan Times from December 19-25



Home is here, but the heart isn't

NO DREAM COUNTRY At a time when the nation is gripped by nationalism, most youth say they would be more happy to live elsewhere

India's famed demographic dividend—half of its 1.2 billion population is below the age of 26—may end up accruing to other countries. Considerably more than half of the young men and women in the HT-MaRS Youth Survey 2016 do not believe that India is irrefutably their homeland, and will be more than happy to live elsewhere.

An overwhelming percentage, about three-fourths, says they find this country at best "acceptable". Most of them rate it poor on gender equality, employment opportunity, educational opportunity, and freedom enjoyed by the youth. Only 12.2% women give the country high ratings, four stars or more, in gender equality. Interestingly, the sentiment is not much different among men: only 12.1% of them rate India at four stars or more in gender equality. The majority—52.8% men and 54.6% women—rate the country poor, at two stars or less, in this area.

Of the things that are of prime concern to young people, the country is not rated highly on any. On employment opportunities, 55.8% men rate the country only at two stars or less. A higher percentage of women—62.1%—rate it at two stars or less on this count. Similarly, on education opportunities, 56.1% men and 58.9% women rate the country at two stars or less. Moving to a more abstract criterion, 57.5% men rate the country at two stars or less in the freedom enjoyed by the youth; this percentage for women is 58.5%.

The optimism is not running high either, a high percentage of men and a higher percentage of women—62.8% and 66.1%, respectively—have no hope that something good is going to happen to this country soon. About half of both men and women believe India needs a superman to set things right. Yet, a high percentage—41% men and 39% women—think they can set things right if made the prime minister for five years. Guess all of us think there is a superman lurking inside us.



TOMORROW: Gadgets

EXPERIMENT, EXPLORE

It is a land of untold tales, endless potential

NEW DELHI: I see India as a land of unexplored opportunities. The vastness and variety of stories that can be pursued in South Asia is remarkable, and if held under a positive light, Indians can be at an advantage. We inherit the tactics of "jugaad" and know the true meaning of management when it comes to fixing and gaining access to something out of reach.

I disagree with the 59% youngsters who gave less than 2 stars to employment opportunities in India in the HT MaRS Youth Survey. Instead, I am with the 18.2% who gave more than 4 stars to our country in this regard, as India is full of untapped potential.

India, as a growing economy, is not just a land of untold stories, but also a big player in the start-up game.

A trend of entrepreneurship is emerging where millennials are encouraged to stand out and present their ideas. They are told to throw the ball in the game to see where it lands.

It seems to be fast becoming a land of endless opportunities. For this, India's education system needs to be acknowledged which produces doctors, engineers and professionals like no other country. Into this system, we need to seed more innovative plants of entrepreneurship to support this plethora of talent emerging every year.

With the global economy crashing, this is the right way to tackle the crisis ahead of us. However, India is not behind the game since experimenting and

YES
Indians can adapt to change
SAHIBA CHAUDHARY

exploring comes easy to us. It is an ideal place for newcomers to venture out into the unknown.

India has started its landing among world players and has a long way to go.

With Donald Trump's presidency, there will be a fall in brain drain that will encourage the talent that natively belongs to India to come back. India is standing out in politics as well as more and more youth is motivated to stand up and bring change.

Millennials are using social media to spread awareness about issues that people refused to talk about before. The reach of viral videos and WhatsApp messages is higher than any newspaper, and with this changing generation, India is among the first to understand and adapt itself to change.

This change is revolutionary, making India a good spot for launching new ideas and replacing old trends.

We so suffer from corruption and red tape. But the country still has a lot of potential and its youth are willing to break the glass ceiling. With equal gender opportunity, India will not be far from breaking records.

A multimedia curator and a visual journalist, Sahiba Chaudhary has worked on multimedia projects around the world. A Delhi university graduate, she is obsessed with Bollywood movies and Punjabi beats. When not swimming in deadlines, she's world trotting

GIVE INDIA TWO STARS OR LESS ON EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

59%
NO

23% respondents gave India three stars or less when asked to rate employment avenues. Only 18.2% gave country four stars or more.

GIVE THE COUNTRY TWO STARS OR LESS IN GENDER EQUALITY

53%
YES

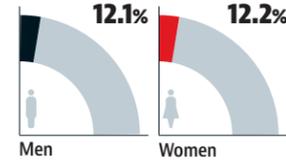
35.2% respondents gave India three stars or more when asked to rate gender equality. Only 12.1% gave the country four stars.



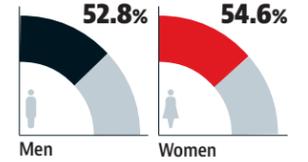
RAJ K RAJ/HT PHOTO

NATION IN QUESTION

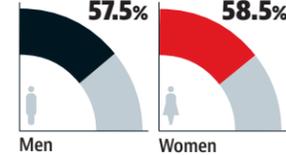
RATE THE COUNTRY HIGH (FOUR STARS OR MORE) IN GENDER EQUALITY



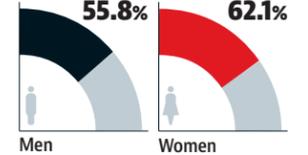
RATE INDIA AT TWO STARS OR LESS IN GENDER EQUALITY



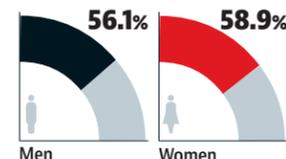
GIVE THE NATION TWO STARS OR LESS IN FREEDOM ENJOYED BY THE YOUTH



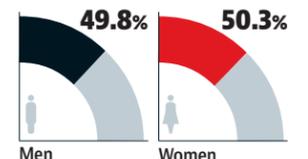
GIVE THE NATION TWO STARS OR LESS IN EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES



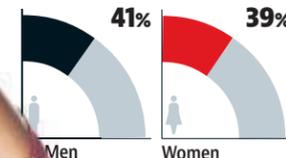
RATE THE COUNTRY AT TWO STARS OR LESS IN EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES



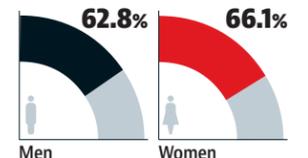
BELIEVE THAT INDIA NEEDS A SUPERMAN TO SET THINGS RIGHT



BELIEVE THEY CAN SET THINGS RIGHT IF MADE THE PRIME MINISTER FOR FIVE YEARS



DON'T EXPECT ANYTHING GOOD TO HAPPEN IN INDIA ANY TIME SOON



METHODOLOGY: India Youth Survey 2016 was carried out by MaRS (Monitoring and Research Systems) in 15 state capitals and major towns in India. Target respondents were both male and female from age groups 18-21 years and 22-25 years, belonging to households with durable ownership of TV, refrigerator and at least one of: car, two wheeler, home computer/laptop, and washing machine. The respondent was either currently a student of undergraduate or above or employed with education graduate or above and a regular user of internet on the smart phone. Total sample size was 5200.

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For full data, interactive graphics, voices, video features and opinion poll, log on to: www.hindustantimes.com/youth-survey-2016

LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

Rights aren't just about reserving a train coach

NEW DELHI: Gender inequality is widespread in rural India and we all know that. What many fail to understand is that it's no different in Indian cities.

I am a 25-year-old woman and grew up mostly in cities. I know for a fact that in my country, gender inequality is the biggest well-disguised problem. And one that hasn't been resolved yet. I believe in equal rights for men and women, but the issue is beyond a train coach reserved for women or reservation on jobs and education.

We know more girls from different sections of society go to school to finish their basic education these days. But what after that?

Sania Mirza, India's top tennis player, gave a befitting reply when she was asked when she planned to embrace motherhood and "settle down".

"You sound disappointed that I'm not choosing motherhood over being number one in the world at this point of time. But I'll answer your question anyway. That's the question I face all the time as a woman, that all women have to face... the first is marriage and then it's motherhood. Unfortunately, that's when we're settled, and no matter how many Wimbledon we win or number ones in the world we become, we don't become settled."

This is the most important point. Most Indian parents start worrying about their daughter's marriage and her future the minute she turns 24, however,

NO
India is yet to win the battle of mentalities
ANJALI THAKUR

the son is told to "focus on his career" at least till he turns 27.

Marriage is one issue that I am completely bummed by in this country. Not to forget that I am still waiting for a day when I can wear a dress that I like and not made to feel uncomfortable on the roads with prying eyes and questioning looks making me regret the decision.

This one is addressed to the ladies as well: A new female employee joins your office and she is on top of her game. However, her pencil heel, skirt slit and red lipstick make you uncomfortable. The moment she beats you to a great appraisal, you "reveal" that the reason is her red lipstick.

You can fight the quotas and reservations, but the battle of mentalities is yet to be conquered.

Men too don't have it easy in our country. Our boys are groomed from childhood to be the family bread-winner because daughters go away after marriage. For most Indian men, passions such as art or singing or writing never get transformed into pay cheques because it doesn't have the value of an IIT or medical degree.

Men or women, we have faced gender inequality in some form or the other in India. That is the truth.

A self-confessed foodie, Anjali Thakur is an arts graduate from Delhi University. She aspires to become part-time dog-sitter and full-time social worker, after she travelled the world with her little salary



WHAT IS YOUNG INDIA'S TAKE ON CHEATING?

Read how the youth feels about relationships, and other such themes

In Hindustan Times from December 19-25



Gadget slaves or virtual warriors?

ADDICTED As the country uses technology to rephrase its social idioms, the young have taken to gadgets, making them a part of their identity

That gadgets have come to control our lives is obvious. That they have come to define us is borne out by the latest Youth Survey by HT and MaRS.

Nearly half of all the respondents — 48.1% — say that you can tell a lot about a person simply by the gadgets they keep. Naturally, there is a rush to buy gadgets. About a third of both genders — 32.9% men and 31.6% women — say that they rush out to buy whenever a new gadget comes out.

Interestingly, in spite of the keenness to buy a gadget and their perceived role in defining us, there is reasonably high awareness of the adverse fallouts of owning them.

As much as 33.6% men say extensive use of gadgets is making the youth unfriendly, and 32% of the women agree. What's more, 38.9% men say gadgets make the youth more prone to lifestyle diseases, a view that is shared by 29.4% of the women who took part in the survey.

However, gadgets are not the outright winner here. On all shopping platforms, especially e-commerce, they are in constant battle with clothes for the share of a person's wallet.

Gadgets are the winner online. Given that they are standardised — if you have seen one iPhone 7, you have seen them all — they outshine most other categories on e-commerce sites.

However, in this survey, clothes win: 76.2% of the men and 80.2% of the women who took part in the survey say they spend more on clothes than on gadgets.

A new element thrown up by this survey is the addiction to power banks, those little portable boxes that charge your devices when there is no plug point or charger at hand. Of the men, 59.1% say they own a power bank.

The percentage is 50.7% for women. Of those that own a power bank, 31.9% men and 27.8% women say they are very addicted to it, whereas 47.7% men and 50.4% women say they are somewhat addicted. That is something for battery researchers to ponder over.



TOMORROW:
Consumerism

GADGET BADGE

An interesting phone may help strike a conversation

NEWDELHI: Over the past few years, gadgets have increasingly become an ever-present externalisation of a person's thoughts, opinions and choices. Just like your clothes, they are always on you, always exposed to glares.

I don't agree with the figures of the HT-MaRS Youth Survey 2016: 52% of its respondents claimed they don't judge people from the gadgets they possess. I belong to the 48% who said they do.

Yes, your gadget acts as a badge of pride, giving you access to a select group of people who live and breathe technology. But one can easily imagine a deeper level of discrimination leading us down a very dark path.

It may seem trivial upon first blush, but a cursory glance at the rabid online communities that are at each other's throats simply because they prefer the products of a competing brand.

Thankfully, the extremism of online communities, where people have the shield of anonymity to hide behind, rarely manifests itself in the real world.

My contention is that even those who say they judge others based on their tech choices rarely do so in a significant manner. Put simply, such a judgement isn't lasting or strong anyway.

India's young is often underestimated in how savvy it really is.

We know that tech brands are companies that are creating products to make profits, not religions or political organisations to start fights over incessantly.

YES
Your gadget gives you access to a select group
HARSHIT PASSI

We know that loving the customisability of Android over the simplicity of iOS or the stability of macOS over the adaptability of Windows are not just causes to wage wars over.

Think of the last time you refrained from talking to a stranger because of the gadget they were wielding.

On the other hand, I can personally recount multiple instances where I have started a conversation with someone just because they're carrying a rare/interesting smartphone or playing an engaging game that I have not come across before.

Of the multitude of things dividing our country right now, I'm thankful that tech isn't one of them. In fact, it is set to be a force for unification in the coming years.

Smartphones are perpetually getting cheaper and the internet is reaching more people every day. Hopefully, one day, we would be able to proudly say that we are one nation, under the umbrella of the internet.

Harshit Passi is a freelance front-end developer and a self-identified technophile. When he is not working or ravenously following tech news, he can be found shouting at television screens during football matches

YOU CAN TELL A LOT ABOUT A PERSON FROM THE GADGETS THEY USE

48%
YES

The respondents were almost evenly divided on this front showing how much gadgets have come to define not only our lives, but also us.

ADDICTION TO GADGETS IS MAKING INDIA'S YOUTH UNFRIENDLY

67%
NO

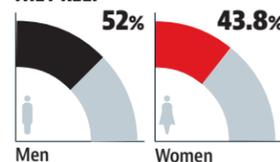
Most did not agree with the notion that extensive use of technology is making India's youth unsocial and prone to lifestyle diseases.



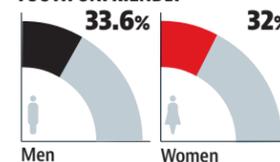
RAJ K RAJ/HT PHOTO

HAVES AND HAVE-NOTS

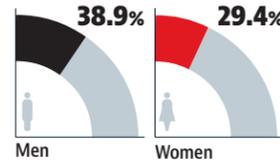
CAN TELL A LOT ABOUT A PERSON FROM THE GADGETS THEY KEEP



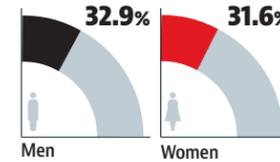
FEEL EXTENSIVE USE OF GADGETS IS MAKING INDIA'S YOUTH UNFRIENDLY



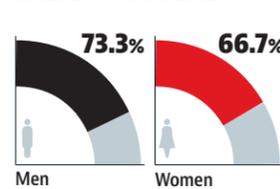
FEEL ADDICTION TO GADGETS MAKES THE YOUTH MORE PRONE TO LIFESTYLE DISEASES



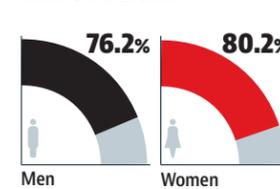
RUSH TO BUY A GADGET WHENEVER IT IS LAUNCHED



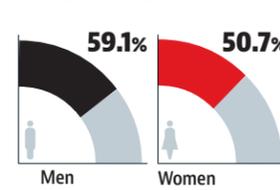
ARE CONSCIOUS OF THE BRAND WHEN BUYING A GADGET



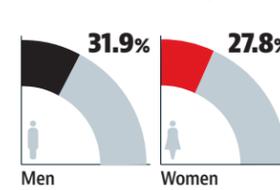
SPEND MORE ON CLOTHES THAN ON GADGETS



OWN A POWER BANK TO CHARGE THEIR GADGETS



OWN A POWER BANK, SAY THEY ARE VERY ADDICTED TO IT



METHODOLOGY: India Youth Survey 2016 was carried out by MaRS (Monitoring and Research Systems) in 15 state capitals and major towns in India. Target respondents were both male and female from age groups 18-21 years and 22-25 years, belonging to households with durable ownership of TV, refrigerator and at least one of: car, two wheeler, home computer/laptop, and washing machine. The respondent was either currently a student of undergraduate or above or employed with education graduate or above and a regular user of internet on the smart phone. Total sample size was 5200.

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For full data, interactive graphics, voices, video features and opinion poll, log on to: www.hindustantimes.com/youth-survey-2016

REAL ENOUGH

Our real-life and digital personalities have merged

NEWDELHI: Visit any café, bar or restaurant, chances are that you will find many young people crouched over their phones, oblivious to their surroundings.

Though they want to spend quality time with their loved ones, most young people end up being immersed in their digital worlds. It's worth pondering — why do people even bother to meet each other, when the only thing they do on meeting is stare at their phones?

Over the past few years, it feels like the separation between our digital and physical worlds has blurred. Our real-life personality and the digital representation of it seem to have merged into one.

By friends, we mean our Facebook friends. By groups, we mean WhatsApp groups. By talking, we mean chatting. By listening, we mean nothing. Nobody listens on the social media. How can we? When we are busy liking, commenting, tweeting and reposting.

Still, let's give credit where it's due. We live in a world where friends once are friends forever. We have heard stories from our parents about school and college friends with whom they've now lost touch. Not us.

We will be able to preserve our friendships through our lifetimes. Thanks to the social networks, it is much easier now to keep in touch with those separated by physical distances. It has also brought families closer,

through shared WhatsApp jokes and photos. Now we can share experiences, in spite of being miles apart. It just happens that those experiences are digital.

A majority of the youngsters who responded to the HT-MaRS Youth Survey 2016 agree to this: A high 67% said they don't agree with the fact that extensive use of gadgets is making India's young unfriendly; only 33% thought otherwise.

Sure, the connected world comes with its own pitfalls. The cost of giving attention to the person across that touchscreen is that you are unable to give attention to the person sitting next to you. A real-world conversation takes a lot more social effort than a two-line chat having cute emojis.

And then, digital conversations offer you a convenience unparalleled in the real world. These factors make the digital world feel much more interesting than the person close by.

As first-class digital citizens, we should be self-aware of the effect our digital world is having on us and on our relationships as well. It's a difficult task, specially given the allure of that enchanting world that exists beyond that wall of glass. But it is the only way to ensure that the tools meant to serve us do not become our masters.

Abhiroop Bhatnagar started his first start-up while in college itself. After graduating from college, he is now building Upstyle, a community for fashion-lovers



ACCEPTANCE OR DENIAL

Read how the youth feels about homosexuality, and other such themes

In Hindustan Times from December 19-25



Shop to be merry, spend to impress

PRIORITY LIST Needs no longer determine what the youth will buy. A purchase is now driven by high-priority social concerns and brand value

There rise of consumerism among the country's young people can no longer be denied, with purchases driven by a keenness to make an impression on others, and the brand becoming the most important attribute of a product.

As much as 37.3% of the respondents in the latest Youth Survey by HT and MaRS admit they sometimes buy things they do not need to impress people, and 62.1% say they paid a high price for the brand name when buying their last smartphone. About half the men, and a little more than half the women say brands and products form a topic of conversations with their friends.

Not just that, 40.7% women say they have more clothes than they need, and 32.4% say they always have more than one lipstick. That can be forgiven, if one is allowed to get away with a dash of sexism, but men are not to be left behind in this area. As much as 35.9% of them say they have more clothes than they need, and 28.3% say they always have more than one deodorant.

The picture becomes a bit hazy from here on. A third of both men and women say they switch brands all the time. Yet, about two-thirds of both genders say their last smartphone acquisition was of the same brand as their previous one. This despite the fact that 60.8% of the men and 67.2% of the women say they chose their last mobile phone brand after a lot of thought.

So that is a feather in the cap for brand power, taking us back to the earlier point that the brand name has become a product's strongest suit. And this is where advertising comes in. As much as 39.6% of the men say they have bought many things because they liked the advertisement, a view shared by 36% of the women.

Expectedly, advertising played a critical role in smartphone purchases. As much as 91% of the men found the advertising for the smartphone they bought to be either good or the best. This was true for 87.1% of the women.



TOMORROW:
Icons



PAID A HEAVY PRICE FOR THEIR LAST SMARTPHONE AS THEY WANTED TO STICK TO THEIR BRAND

38%

NO

Brand name is the most important attribute in a smartphone for the young. Most in Mumbai (74%) said they get swayed by the brand.

SOMETIMES BUY THINGS THEY DO NOT NEED TO IMPRESS PEOPLE

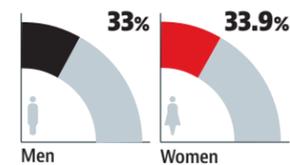
37%

YES

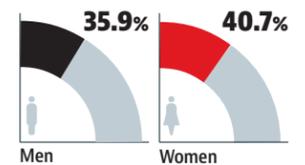
More women (38%) than men (36%) said they are guilty of this. Youngsters in Indore (62.5%) said they buy things to show off.

OUT OF THE CLOSET

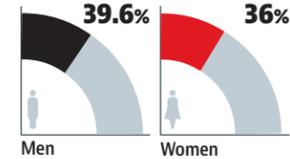
SWITCH BRANDS ALL THE TIME



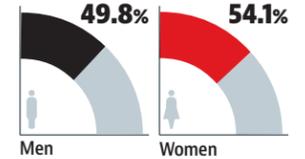
HAVE MORE CLOTHES THAN THEY NEED



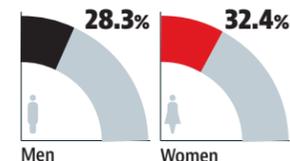
HAVE BOUGHT MANY THINGS BECAUSE THEY LIKED THE ADVERTISEMENT



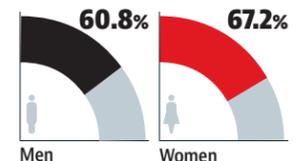
DISCUSS BRANDS AND PRODUCTS WITH FRIENDS



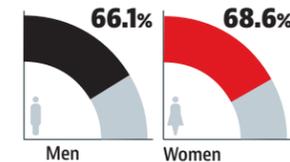
HAVE MORE THAN ONE DEODORANT OR LIPSTICK



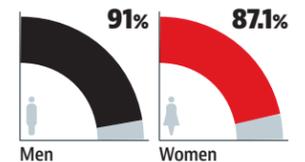
CHOSE THEIR LAST MOBILE PHONE BRAND AFTER A LOT OF THOUGHT



STICK TO THEIR FAVOURITE SMARTPHONE BRAND



FOUND THE ADVERTISEMENT OF THE SMARTPHONE THEY BOUGHT TO BE GOOD OR BEST



METHODOLOGY: India Youth Survey 2016 was carried out by MaRS (Monitoring and Research Systems) in 15 state capitals and major towns in India. Target respondents were both male and female from age groups 18-21 years and 22-25 years, belonging to households with durable ownership of TV, refrigerator and at least one of: car, two wheeler, home computer/laptop, and washing machine. The respondent was either currently a student of undergraduate or above or employed with education graduate or above and a regular user of internet on the smart phone. Total sample size was 5200.

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For full data, interactive graphics, voices, video features and opinion poll, log on to: www.hindustantimes.com/youth-survey-2016

HAVE MONEY WILL SPEND

We have replaced utility with validation

NEW DELHI: We live in a world where every aspect of our existence is scrutinised, ranging from the clothes we wear to the food we eat, the cars we drive and the company we keep.

It's a sad truth but our lives are, knowingly or unknowingly, governed by how we like people to perceive us and think about us.

Stemming from this need to be validated by strangers, one can't be blamed for wanting to keep up with the times. Though more true for some than others, a major upside of having a job is so that you finally have some sort of spending power. Moving on from the days where our parents and their parents' priorities were rooted in saving for the future, ours tend to be a little different.

A sizable chunk of our earnings often end up being spent on stuff that makes us happy and whatever little is leftover goes into saving for that one rainy day.

Funnily enough, we often reward ourselves for saving money by buying more stuff we might not necessarily need.

In this quest for seeking happiness in inanimate things, one would want to obtain the ultimate for oneself.

Somewhere along the road, we seem to have replaced utility with validation. Nowadays, with the plethora of options available, one would only have eyes for the top of the pile.

This begs the question, what is the best of the best? How does one decide? Is it the value the user sees in it? Is that value derived from how other peo-

YES

Spending money on things makes you happy

HENRY JOSEPH

ple around you view that product? Is it the insecurities that the purchase will help one compensate for?

I agree with what the figures from the HT-MaRS Youth Survey 2016 has thrown up: 66% of youngsters who responded to the survey said they sometimes pay more for a product just because it is branded.

As an avid football player, I find myself always looking for top of the line football shoes, probably with the misplaced hope that it would perhaps make me a little less bad.

The brand that I prefer to use is prominent, foreign, expensive and not durable at all. The truth is, I could get a relatively similar level of comfort and performance from a less costly, Indian brand. However, brand loyalty is a funny thing. It prevent you for doing what you know is right or making the right choice.

Turns out, I, too, am a big fan of buying stuff that makes me happy which, I guiltily admit, makes zero sense. I guess it takes one to know one.

Henry Joseph is a professional pianist. His hobbies include football, reading and gaming. He calls himself a history nut

BUYING INSTINCT

You don't need a product to be respected in society

NEW DELHI: Before we begin, you must remember these words by writer Chuck Palahniuk (Fight Club) — "We buy things we don't need with money, we don't have to impress people we don't like".

There is a large section of our population that believes that the purchase and acquisition of products is the only way they can impress people.

For instance, the overenthusiastic young men who drive the XYZ car with its newly installed JBL stereo. Or the women, who have more accessories than the space in which to put them.

Now, do we anticipate that this tendency could lead to other problems, or simply say, this will change with time? On numerous occasions in the past we have failed to anticipate this problem as a society because it is not a familiar one.

What we need to see is that things around us have changed drastically over the last decade; technology has now come into existence, offering new solutions but it also generates new problems. Are we ready to tackle this or are we willing to accept that there could be a monster in this new closet?

Palahniuk makes a very important point and one that we often miss: "You are not your job, you're not how much money you have in the bank. You are not the car you drive. You're not the contents of your wallet."

NO

Buying is not the only way to impress

KEWIN KUNJAPPY

Even 20 years ago when Fight Club was written, it was the most honest comment on the de-humanising nature of consumerism and how economics places importance on profits rather than human dignity. The people who have internalised this train of thought cannot be blamed for this behaviour, for this is exactly what advertising does to people.

It makes them believe that they need a particular product to elevate themselves to a certain standard or to gain recognition from a certain set of people or to belong to a social circle.

It degrades their humanity by giving them an illusion of what is perfect and clouds their judgement, but we must agree that we are all works in progress.

We need to celebrate diversity in the current era in which there is an endless war between corrupting ideologies which benefit by creating differences among vulnerable people. We need to see each other as humans, and that should be the message we convey to people, and not see them based on their possessions.

Each person has a distinct personality which needs to be nurtured and cherished. If we continue to harbour such shallow beliefs that are planted so easily in our minds, then Palahniuk's protagonist from Fight Club Tyler Durden has a message for you: "The things you own end up owning you."

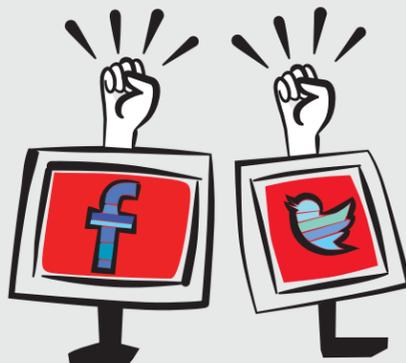
Kewin Kunjappy is a lawyer who loves jazz music and in his spare time likes to explore foreign films



ARMCHAIR ACTIVISM OR REAL PROTEST?

Read how the youth feels about dissent

In Hindustan Times from December 19-25



Kohli, the best role model in the world

BIG PICTURE India's young voted Virat Kohli as biggest role model alive while Prime Minister Narendra Modi was chosen the best political icon

The latest Youth Survey by HT and MaRS is a big win for India's Test cricket captain Virat Kohli, who emerged the biggest sports icon in the world with 42.8% of the overall votes. He is way ahead of second-placed Mahendra Singh Dhoni, who was favoured by only 9.7% of the voters, and Roger Federer, who finished third with 8.5% votes.

However, in an even bigger win, Kohli was favoured by the largest percentage of voters — 26.4% — as the best living role model for young people all over the world. That put him ahead of outgoing United States president Barack Obama, who received 24% votes, and India's prime minister, Narendra Modi, who was chosen by 18.7% of the voters.

Modi, though, is the biggest icon in Indian politics, with nearly half the voters favouring him. That puts him way ahead of second-placed Arvind Kejriwal, who received 14% of the votes, and Congress president Sonia Gandhi, who got 8%. Rahul Gandhi, Congress vice-president, was favoured by only 2.7% voters. Actor Ranbir Kapoor may not have had the best time at the box office of late until Ae Dil Hai Mushkil became a hit. However, in this survey, he emerged the runaway winner of the sexiest-man-alive poll, with 31.4% of the respondents rooting for him. The sexiest-woman-alive crown goes to actress Deepika Padukone with 29.1% of the overall votes, but it is a close call between her and Katrina Kaif when you look at the breakup of male and female votes.

Corruption, the country's old bug bear, is still seen as the biggest challenge facing the country — 34.2% of the respondents chose it. Terrorism was seen as the second biggest, getting 23.6% votes. But more voters — 36.9% — chose terrorism as the biggest challenge facing the world, with corruption getting only 8.1% of the votes.

THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE FACING THE WORLD IS TERRORISM

37% YES

Both men and women said terrorism was the biggest challenge for the world, followed by climate change, depleting natural resources and others.

CORRUPTION IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE FACING INDIA

34% YES

Terrorism (24%), religious intolerance (8%), women's safety (16%) and economic infrastructure were the other problems listed by the youth.

Religious fundamentalism narrows one's ability to see reason

A more than six-decade-old fight cannot be won overnight



ACROSS THE GLOBE

Religious fanaticism is root cause of terrorism

NEW DELHI: Religious fundamentalism and fundamentalism are probably the two most commonly used and yet the most ambiguously defined terms today.

The boundaries between the two are often blurred and any act of violence is easily labelled as either religious fundamentalism or terrorism; to the extent that one may deem the two synonymous.

It is clear from the HT-MaRS Youth Survey 2016: Almost 37% of India's youth put 'terrorism' as the biggest challenge in the world today; compared to it, only 8% identified 'religious fundamentalism' as the culprit.

Delve deeper, and most would relate terrorism with one religious extremist outfit or another, making it obvious that the two are the same in the minds of the young.

Terrorism is multifaceted: It includes reasons that may be religious, sociological, criminal or political in nature.

The motivations behind acts of terrorism are equally diverse. Often, they stem from the failure of socio-political machinery in a state; which then uses religion to lend itself legitimacy.

Having accepted this premise, religious fundamentalism appears to be more of the root cause; and terrorism, the symptom of what is ailing the world at large today. Religious fundamentalism is merely a retreat to the refuge of long upheld 'ancient truth' and 'moral commandment' which, mostly, is not

grounded in reason. Such sentiment, when exploited to fulfil ignoble ends, is more difficult to oppose than sentiments rooted in logic or those open to debate.

Religious fundamentalism may well be understood as a cage built of rigid beliefs which one finds difficult to escape. It fosters a closeted mind and narrows one's ability to see reason.

The effects manifest in various ways. On one hand, it hinders the expansion of one's own horizon of thinking, and on the other, opposes progress in fields of science.

Religious fundamentalism appeals to a static view of reality and does not leave room for accepting change, diversity and evolution. It is, without doubt, the biggest challenge facing the world today.

In sum, it is high time one looked away from the mere symptom and delved deeper into the major challenge facing the world today; which is religious fundamentalism or we all risk losing the vision of the modern global society that the young generation so deserves.

Hiba Khair, an economics graduate and an MBA in Finance, has worked as a business analyst for a leading bank. She gave it all up to set up her own business by the name of JAAMA, designing and selling women's apparel, thereby generating employment for the marginalised sections of the community

NO
Religious fundamentalism does not leave room for change
HIBA KHAIR

YES
Damages of terrorism are far reaching and permanent
RAGHAV RATHI

INSIDE INDIA

Must strengthen national security to counter terror

NEW DELHI: Terrorism. Better minds than mine have tried, and failed, to define terrorism. So let's stick only to the literal meaning. 'Terror + ism': The doctrine of terror. Seems simple enough? Yet, it has boggled the whole world primarily because of two reasons: Firstly, a 'terrorist' in one country might be a 'freedom fighter' in another; secondly, certain states are known to sponsor such activities in other states. Both these reasons boil down to a lack of political will to come up with a universally acceptable definition of the malaise.

Today, India has a buffet of terrorist activities to deal with. Looking at the multiple challenges India faces, the figure of 23.6% of India's youngsters who voted for it in the HT-MaRS Youth Survey 2016 as the second biggest challenge facing India today, seems to be an understatement. One contributing factor to this can be that a lot of people do not put Naxalism and northeast insurgency under the head of terrorism.

Among the respondents, 34.2% have termed corruption as the biggest challenge facing India. At face value, it might seem so. We see, hear or experience corruption on a daily basis, whereas terrorism is something most people aren't directly affected by. However, both the visible and collateral damages of terrorism are far reaching and permanent in nature. Religion, unfortunately, is both a cause and an effect of terrorism. The

differentiating line between religious intolerance and religious terrorism is blurred at best and non-existent mostly. It has been on the rise lately and leads to sidelining and further alienation of certain factions.

Economy is probably one of the biggest sufferers

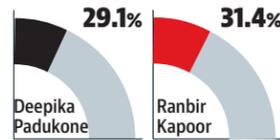
of terrorism. Apart from the obvious personal and property damage, to stop such activities from occurring in future, a massive increase in security and military expenditure is required. Most of the development activities in affected areas stop as people don't want to invest in such volatile zones. A new type of terrorism has been surfacing recently, very aptly termed as neo-terrorism, in an attempt to create a revanchist movement by re-kindling the dormant feelings of anger in the Sikh community. It idolises slain gangsters and considers terrorism as 'swag'. This needs prompt tackling without unnecessarily or unwittingly aggravating the situation.

A more than six-decade-old fight — with opponents that keeps evolving — cannot be won overnight, but the steps taken by the new regime, including the surgical strikes definitely seem to be moves in the right direction. With that being said, it will still be some time before we can safely say that terrorism is not the biggest challenge facing India.

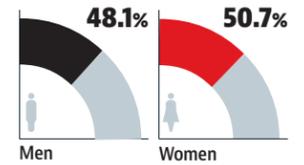
Raghav Rathi is a 22-year-old Aerospace Engineering graduate and a UPSC aspirant, currently residing in New Delhi

MOVERS AND SHAKERS

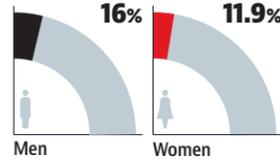
DEEPIKA PADUKONE IS THE SEXIEST WOMAN AND RANBIR KAPOOR THE SEXIEST MAN ALIVE



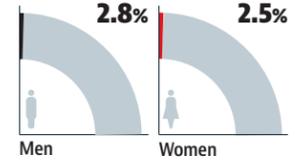
PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI IS THE BIGGEST ICON IN INDIAN POLITICS



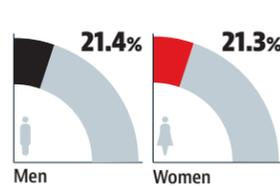
DELHI CHIEF MINISTER ARVIND KEJRIWAL IS THE BIGGEST INDIAN POLITICAL ICON



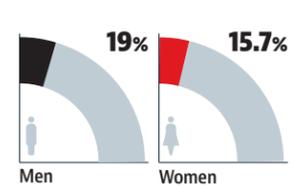
CONGRESS VICE-PRESIDENT RAHUL GANDHI IS THE BIGGEST ICON IN INDIAN POLITICS



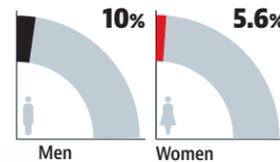
SHAH RUKH KHAN IS THE BIGGEST ICON IN BOLLYWOOD



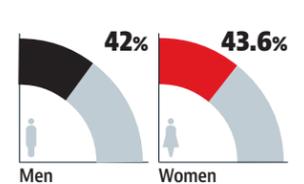
AMITABH BACHCHAN IS THE BIGGEST ICON IN BOLLYWOOD



KANGANA RANAUT IS THE BIGGEST FEMALE ICON IN BOLLYWOOD



Virat Kohli is the biggest global icon in sports



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RAJ K RAJ/HT PHOTO



WHAT IS YOUNG INDIA'S TAKE ON CHEATING?

Read how the youth feels about relationships, and other such themes

In Hindustan Times from December 19-25

