

Interpersonal Assertive Communication Behavior of Indian Millennials

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Post globalization, India, witnessed some changes at social, economic and cultural levels resulting in the emergence of a new generation of Indian millennial youth who shares many common traits with millennials from other parts of the world. The purpose of this study is to investigate the interpersonal assertive communication behavior of these millennials. The findings reveal that new Millennials have taken a radical departure from their immediate predecessor's belief system as is evident in their interpersonal communication behavior. They are more assertive, honest, upfront, and forthright as compared to older generation who continue to respect the power differentials, thereby, sustaining high power distance culture in India.

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Introduction

India is predicted to be the youngest country in the world by 2022 with an average age of 29 (Nayar, 2013). It becomes obvious that this new huge, powerful, and overwhelming force of millennials will dominate the business scene in India and they can wield immense influence on the way businesses are run. Thus, it becomes imperative to have a more nuanced understanding of Indian millennials in order to deal with them more effectively and productively.

Post globalization, India, witnessed some changes at social, economic and cultural levels. A new generation of Indian millennial youth is emerging who are seen to be different in their habits, choices, mindsets, expectations etc. from the older generations (Mahajan, 2017). Strauss and Howe (1991) in their Generational Theory explain that the era in which a person was born affects the development of his view about the world and his value systems are shaped by observing the working pattern of his immediate previous generation. Thus, the radical change that we witness today in New Indian Millennials could be attributed to the technological revolu-

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tion that occurred throughout their youth and helped them to connect with the wider world and are exposed to better education and more new opportunities. Indian millennials share many common traits with the millennials from other parts of the world. They too, are assumed to be more evolved, more liberal and unlike their predecessors are not driven by older values. They are also seen to be gender sensitive. They treat women at par, have no hassles in working with women colleagues, share a comfort level with women employees and are ready to acknowledge their contribution at workplace. This set of millennials are open to the idea of double income at home, and also very supportive of their wives pushing their careers. Gupta (2016) in his analysis based on the recent Morgan Stanley report on its Alpha Wise survey, commented, “The youth of this generation are better educated, better connected to information, and better connected to the world than their predecessors in prior generations. Indian Millennials could become the largest disruptive force in India for years to come, and this trend is still in its nascent stages.”

Different Styles of Communication

There is a stereotypical view of millennials that characterizes them as technologically sophisticated multitaskers, capable of significant contributions to

tomorrow’s organizations, yet deficient in communication skills (Hartman & McCambridge, 2011). Indian corporations have been increasingly, expressing their concern on poor communication skills in English among the fresh recruits whom they feel have become as ‘corporate burdens’ (Agarwal & Chitranshi, 2013). Their responses could vary from avoidance and accommodation to competition and aggression in various events. When people are seen to display courage to stand up and speak out for their own positions against the other person’s view, he is defined as an assertive person. Similarly when a person let others dominate him/her, impose their will on them, they are labelled as submissive and the person who intrudes into the personal space of others is defined as aggressive. Thus, the interpersonal communication style is categorized into three: aggressive, passive and assertive with each behavior having its own characteristic behavioral and verbal signs. Generally, people converse in one or a combination of these three types of communication. The effectiveness of interpersonal relations depends to a great extent on the effectiveness of our interpersonal communication behavior which is supposedly known to play a role in stress management, conflict resolution and developing a positive self-concept. It can be used as an instrument for initiating and maintaining socially supportive relationships and hence enjoying better emotional well-being (Eskin, 2003; Ames & Wazlawek, 2014). Having the right touch with interpersonal assertiveness is not only meaningful but it is a big challenge to acquire this skill (Ames, 2008; Ames & Wazlawek, 2014).

Influence of National Culture

India is a high power distance culture where powerful people receive disproportionately larger gains than the less powerful persons (Hofstede, 1980). “A boss, a father, and a teacher are not to be questioned and their authority is not to be challenged” (Sinha, 2008: 40). Juniors and subordinates go the extra mile to show their submissiveness and loyalty to their seniors and superiors (Sinha, 1990). They are not supposed to retort to a senior even if they are wrong, or try to undermine the senior’s authority. It is generally a norm for the Gen. X and the baby boomers in India to accept the power differentials and submit to the authority of people who are seniors in position or status. Thus, in view of the new millennials in India, who have an exposure to the Western world which thrives on the principles of equanimity, liberalism and transparency, it is observed that they have taken a departure from the traditional mindset of subservility. Nilekani (2008) anticipates that the Indians growing up in post-liberalization India would not be interested in living with the legacy of the past and they will rather forge new paths. Kalpathi (2016), too, admits to the changes happening amongst the new Indian millennials but the change is gradual. According to him, internet has limited penetration in India, hence, its benefits could not have reached and been availed by the rural youth as well. Besides, he opines that the Indian students are not as yet, willing to take the big leap out of the comfort of their parental support system. They, according to him continue to be the prisoners to the expecta-

tions of their parents. Thus, there is a change but it is gradual and not radical.

Relevance & Objective of the Study

It is obvious that there has been a generational swap /shift in India, but the question arises: has this generational shift impacted their interpersonal communication behavior as well. Has the new life experiences impacted their choice of communication style? Has the new generation of millennials broken away from their traditional role models who were majorly from their large families, or replaced by role models from their workplace and professional world? Do they stand up for their rights and privileges like their counterparts in the West or do they continue to follow the model behavior of their predecessors? Does it lead to some kind of generational diversity characterizing Indian organizations? There is a need to seek answers to these queries as it has been established that interpersonal communication assertive behavior of people leads to effective working relationships of employees as the wellbeing of the self. Thus, the objective of the present study is primarily, to investigate the generational differences (between the older generation and the new Millennials) with respect to their interpersonal assertive communication behavior.

Concept of Generations & the Generational Classification

“A generation is defined as an ‘identifiable group that shares birth years, age location, and significant life events at critical developmental stages’ (Kupperschmidt, 2000: 66). This implies

that generations are classified into different categories based on their socio-cultural beliefs and attitudes, and the historical events that individuals witness in their growing-up years. Earlier, approximately around twenty years were considered as a difference in age for the generation shift, but now, this gap is reduced further as these days, one can get to taste difference of opinion within generations which are as less as five years apart. There have been many attempts made by researchers and, practitioners etc. to identify these generations like silent generation; generation baby boomer, Gen.X or gen.Y etc. (Cekada, 2012; Dwyer, 2009; Lester et al., 2012). There have been studies specific to Indian context also, related to classification of generations (Ghosh & Chaudhari, 2009; Ericson, 2009; Singh, 2013). Some have used the historical context and others economic liberalization as the base point. The present study uses the concept of generation as identified by Dokadia (2015) who categorized the generations into three broad categories including senior (born in 1969 or earlier), middle (born in 1970–1984) and young (born in 1985 or later). The present study chose to use Dokadia's (2015) study as the base for classifying the generations in India since this study is the most recent classification of generations in India.

Assertiveness as a Concept

Assertiveness, broadly speaking, is defined as standing up for one's personal rights and communicating thoughts, feelings, and beliefs in a sincere, straightforward, and appropriate manner without violating others' rights (Lange & Jakubowski,

1976). Assertive communication involves respect for the boundaries of oneself and others. It also presumes an interest in the fulfillment of needs and wants through cooperation (Gottman, 2000).

Vagos and Pereira (2010) attributes people's assertive and non-assertive behavior to their cognitive filters or emotions that interprets social cues differently. For instance, non-assertive behavior is linked to certain affective personality variables such as low-self-esteem; inhibitory anxiety; social anxiety or fear of disapproval; self-depreciation; low sense of worth, excessive interpersonal anxiety, fear of negative evaluation or shyness (Wolpe, 1976; Rich & Schroeder, 1976; Galassi et al., 1974; Lefevre & West, 1981; Orenstein, Orenstein & Carr, 1975; Watson & Friend, 1969; Kirk, 2011). Simultaneously, other studies have revealed direct and positive relationship between assertiveness and high self-esteem, extraversion, openness to experience, and conscientiousness (Kirk, 2011; Lefevre & West, 1981). It is also, indicated that assertive individuals are likely to have greater socially supportive relationships and hence enjoy better emotional well-being (Alberti & Emmons, 1970; Eskin, 2003). However, Eskin (2003) also points out that assertiveness may be the sought after interpersonal behavior, but the other two styles of communication behavior like, submissive and aggressive behavior, also, have its relevance in specific situations. She further reveals that at times, people may

Assertive individuals are likely to have greater socially supportive relationships

not appreciate frankness or open behavior of people as it can sometime lead to some conflicts with the needs of the social environment. Thus, interpersonal communication was more effective and comprehensive when people were able to control their spontaneous expressions instead of proclamation of all emotions (Romek, 2003; Stepanov, 2006; Stein, 2006). Assertiveness is seen as “the behavioral middle ground, lying between ineffective passive and aggressive responses” (O’ Donohue & Fisher, 2008).

A considerable amount of research has examined gender dynamics in assertiveness, and has found that women by asserting themselves enjoy certain edge or favors in conflict and negotiation. One of these involves integrating displays of warmth and friendliness into assertive overtures (Diekman, 2007; Kray, Locke & Van Zant, 2012). This approach may reduce a counterpart’s feeling of threat or the sense that a woman is violating gender roles. Overtly signaling relational concerns may also be helpful for women, such as stressing the value they place on relationships (Bowles & Babcock, 2013) and framing themselves as negotiating on behalf of others (Amanatullah & Tinsley, 2013). Women may also benefit from addressing their own cognitive barriers about their negotiation capabilities by adopting a growth mindset (Kennedy & Kray, 2015).

Indian Studies on Interpersonal Assertive Communication

The number of studies on assertiveness in the Indian context ap-

pears to be miniscule compared to large size of population that resides in India. There have been qualitative inquiries to explore if women in India exhibit assertiveness when confronted with challenging situations. From the study of Acharya, Sharma and Nair (2016), the three key themes emerged from the analysis of the data are: perceptions of others to one being assertive, sense of freedom after having expressed one’s emotions assertively and consequences of being assertive appeared to be major concerns in being assertive. Mehra (2018) assesses three communication styles of doctors-directive expressive, relational and thinker/analytical, and their impact on patient satisfaction in primary care centers in India. The results reveal that patients’ satisfaction with the healthcare was associated positively with both the directive/expressive and relational communication styles. Some studies in the Indian context also showed that assertive competencies were acquired after assertion training was imparted to nursing students, adolescents, alcoholics, people suffering from low self-esteem or people having problem in saying “No” (Soni & Srinivisan, 2017; Shanmugam & Kathyayini, 2017; Dave, 2011). Devanesan and Saral (2016) revealed that women who have studied science subjects are highly assertive when compared to other women. It is suggested that science subject develops in a person open mindedness, problem solving skills and personality traits. Results indicated significant difference in the assertive behavior of Indian and Serbian samples apart from significant relationship between personality and

assertiveness. Parray and Kumar (2016) examined the assertiveness level of undergraduate students with reference to their gender and the findings reveal that there is no significant difference between students in their level of assertiveness with respect to gender. There have been other studies that have investigated the influence of cultural factors on the communication styles. Lather, Jain and Shukla (2010) aimed at finding out the differences and the similarities which existed across different cultures (Asian, America & Australian) as far as resolving interpersonal conflict was concerned and how cultural factors played a role in choosing different styles to conflict resolution. Based on the review, the following broad conclusions emerge:

- There is a positive relationship between age and assertiveness
- There is a positive relationship between gender and assertiveness
- The native culture influences the communication style of people
- Assertiveness is the ideal communication behavior but submissiveness as well as aggressiveness too have their relevance in certain situations
- Assertive behavior helps to establish harmonious social relationships and emotional well being
- Women science students are more assertive as it is found that science subject develops in a person open mindedness, problem solving skills and personality traits

Research Hypothesis

The foregone studies have well established the fact that interpersonal assertive communication behavior is an important communication skill that impacts our interpersonal relations and helps us maintain socially supportive and harmonious relationships (Eskin, 2003). Thus, based on the related research findings, the following hypothesis is framed to check the difference:

Hypothesis 1: There is a direct relationship between age of respondents and assertiveness they possess.

Hypothesis 2: There is significant difference among gender as far as assertiveness is concerned

Hypothesis 3: There is significant difference on assertiveness between older generation and the New Millennials across gender.

Interpersonal assertive communication behavior is an important communication skill that impacts our interpersonal relations and helps us maintain socially supportive and harmonious relationships.

Participants

In order to test the interpersonal assertive communication behavior of people in India across different age groups and gender, two sets of samples were collected. The purpose was to study which group is more assertive i.e. whether there

is any difference on assertiveness among Generation Senior and Generation Young. One group consisted of the students pursuing their MBA programme in different colleges in the NCR region and they were in the age group of 20-28 representing the Young group. The other group constituted of people falling in the age group of 35-55 and above, representative of Senior group as per the classification by Dakodia (2015). The Senior group were all employees working in different sectors of the industry including FMCG; Manufacturing, IT and ITeS and majorly they were from the mid-management section. The population falling in the age group of 20 and 28 were put in one group where as the population falling in the age group of 35 and above were placed in another group. The younger group was labelled as New Millennials (since they were closer to them in their behavior) and the second group was used as the older generation majorly for the convenience of differentiating between two groups.

The researcher through personal contacts approached people in industry personally and telephonically and requested them to fill up the questionnaire sent online. A total of 210 questionnaires were sent to people working at different managerial levels in different corporate sectors. Only 50 filled in questionnaires were returned. 300 questionnaires were sent online to three Business Management Schools in the NCR region. The faculty in these colleges were requested to allow students to fill up the questionnaires. A total of 98 questionnaires were collected from the student population in the NCR region. However, out of 98 responses, only 52 were found to be complete and fit to be tested. Rest were rejected. Thus, the total sample constituted of 102. Gender-wise distribution of respondents is given in Table 1. There are 49% males and 51% females. Age of the respondents varies from 20 years to 60 years. Average age of the respondents is 30 years.

Table 1 Gender-Wise Distribution of Respondents

Male		Female		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%
50	49.0	52	51.0	102	100.0

Tools Used

A questionnaire on assertiveness was developed taking help from related literature to test the ability of the section of Indian population to formulate and communicate one’s own thoughts, opinions and wishes in a clear, direct and non-aggressive way (Appendix I). It was a scale having nine opinion (questions) statements using the Likert’s scale of

four options: Frequently; Sometime; Few Times and Never. The items were found to be comprehensive enough to meet the objectives of the study. For validation of the tool, the items were rated by fourteen students (doing MBA) and fourteen managers from different industries on a three-point rating scale viz. (1) most relevant (2) relevant (3) least relevant. Kendall’s Coefficient of Concordance was used to check the extent of agree-

ment between the students and the managers. Value of chi square (132.20) was found to be significant at .01 level indicating that there was an agreement between the students and the managers from the industry confirming that the items were representative of the assertiveness and measured what these were intended to measure. Further, to ascertain the reliability of the scale, Coefficient Cronbach Alpha (found to be

Table 2 Coefficient Cronbach Alpha. Reliability on Scale of Assertiveness

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.73	9

Table 3 Correlation between Assertiveness & Age of the Respondent

		Assertiveness	Age of the respondent
Assertiveness	Pearson Correlation	1	-.563**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	102	102
Age of the respondent	Pearson Correlation	-.563	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	102	102

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The Pearson Correlation indicates that there is strong correlation between the age of the respondents and the assertiveness.

The Pearson Correlation -.563 indicates that there is strong correlation between the age of the respondents and the assertiveness. The negative sign indicates that assertiveness is inversely proportional to the age, it means that as the

high at 0.73) was calculated. The result indicate that the internal consistency of the scale was found to be high and reliable. A section of the scale was related to their demographic information which included questions about gender, age, educational level and employment status.

Results & Analysis

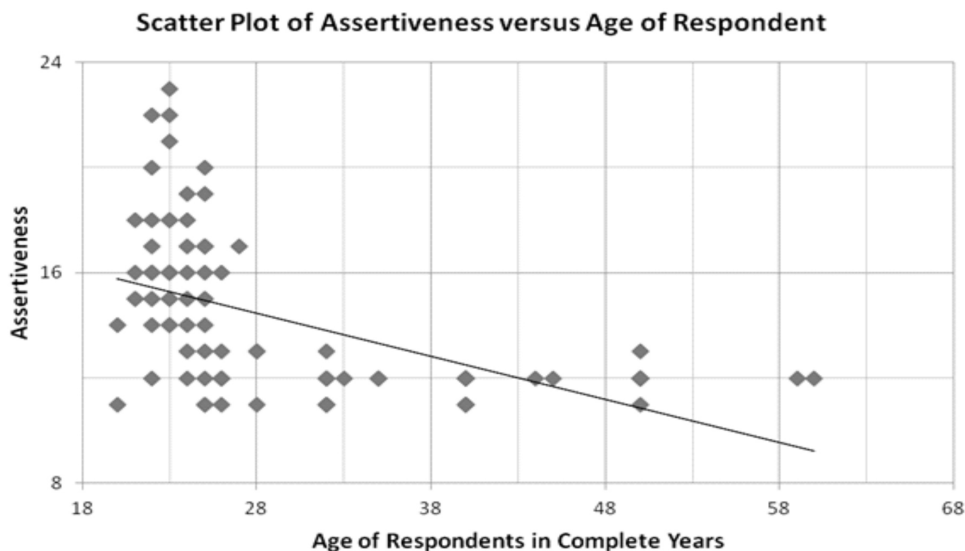
The collected data was analysed using SPSS statistical software to assess assertiveness in relation to gender and age.

Hypothesis 1a: There is direct relationship between age of respondents and assertiveness they possess.

age increases, the assertiveness decreases. This is clear from the scatter plot between age and assertiveness (Fig. 1).

The inventory score was computed simply by adding the responses of 9 questions. This inventory score is known as *assertiveness*. To test the above hypothesis correlation between age of the respondent and their assertiveness is applied. It is found that Pearson Correlation Coefficient is -.563

Fig. 1 Scatter Plot of Assertiveness vs Age of Respondents



Hypothesis 1b: There is significant difference among respondents belonging to New Generation of Millennials (Below 30 years) and the Older Generation (More than or equal to 30 years).

To test the above hypothesis t-test is applied and the mean value and standard deviations of assertiveness for Older Generation and New Millennials are given in Table 3. There are 41 respondents belonging to Older Generation and 61 belonging to New Millennials.

Table 3 Test of Significance on Assertiveness among Age-Group (t-Test)

Age Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-Value
Generation New Millennials (Belo 30 Years)	61	15.4754	2.90176	8.004**
Generation Older (Above 30 Years)	41	11.8049	.51086	

** Significant at p-value .05

The mean value of assertiveness of the respondents belonging to Generation New Millennials is 15.4754 and that of Older Generation is 11.8049. The Standard Deviation of assertiveness of the two groups is 2.90176 and 0.51086 respectively. That means the respondents belonging to Generation of New Millennials are more assertive. In other

words, younger generation is more assertive. The t-value is 8.004 indicating that the difference of assertiveness is

The difference of assertiveness is highly significant between Generation New Millennials and Older Generation.

highly significant at (p-value > .01) between Generation New Millennials and Older Generation.

Our next objective is to check whether males are more assertive or the females. To look at it, following hypothesis is framed and t-test for independent sample is applied to answer the above question.

Hypothesis 2: There is significant difference among gender as far as assertiveness is concerned:

The result of the t-test is presented in Table 4 below. The mean value of assertiveness of Male and Female is 14.5800 and 13.4423 respectively and the Standard Deviation is 3.11736 and 2.56991 respectively.

Table 4 Test of Significance on Assertiveness among Gender (t-Test)

Gender of the respondent	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-Value
Male	50	14.5800	3.11736	2.014*
Female	52	13.4423	2.56991	

* Significant at p-value .05

Males are more assertive as compared to Females.

This indicates that Males are more assertive as compared to Females. The last column of the Table 4 shows the t-value is 2.014 indicating that there is a significant difference on assertiveness between male and female.

Hypothesis 3: There is significant difference on assertiveness among Older Generation and New Millennials across gender.

The mean value and standard deviations of assertiveness for Older Generation and New Millennials separately for males and females are given in Table 5. It is clear that Assertiveness for the two generations of males and females is almost the same and younger generation is more assertive than the older one irrespective of the gender. The difference on assertiveness across generation is highly significant irrespective of the gender (t-value for males is 3.904 and for females is 7.739)

Table 5 Test of Significance (t-Test) on Assertiveness among Age-Group Separately for Males & Females

Gender of the respondent	Age Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-Value
Male	Generation 'X'	39	15.3846	3.07464	3.904**
	Generation 'Y'	11	11.7273	.46710	
Female	Generation 'X'	22	15.6364	2.62851	7.739**
	Generation 'Y'	30	11.8333	.53067	

** Significant at p-value .01

Discussion

The above results reveal that self-assertiveness among the New Millennials is seen more pronounced than in the older generation of people in India. This can further be interpreted as the New Millennials are more confident and more assured. The results reveal whenever new Millennials are threatened physically, mentally or emotionally by some controlling, toxic or aggressive personalities, they generally do not expend themselves in trying to grapple with them or react to them. They would rather prefer to remain disengaged or denounced with these kinds of people who are negatively entrenched. They look to avoid behaviors that create unease such as condescension or people being ironical. However, at the same time, the results indicate that if they find themselves stuck with a very difficult person, and there's no way out, they will not hesitate to stand down the person without sounding abusive or attacking. Further, if they disagree with something, they say it directly. They do voice their opinions even if it is against the opposite person's point of view. They are usually able to tell people how they feel, even when others disagree with them. They do not sacrifice their identity to avoid contradictions. People around them cannot force them to do things which go against their interest or need. They can refuse to oblige or say "no" without feeling guilty about it. This shows that they are conscious and protective about their fundamental rights and at the same time they respect other peoples' rights. Besides, the results also, indicate that the New Millennials like it when their

opinion is sought by others implying that they like to feel important. They are not shy and do not suffer from low self-esteem. Besides, the New Millennials also show confidence to connect and communicate effectively with people they think are important. They do not hesitate or shy away from seeking help, support or some clarification of things that are not clear to them. These findings corroborate the observations made by Nilekani (2008) and Kalapathi (2016) that this generation has carved its own distinct identity from the new situational cues.

They are not shy and do not suffer from low self-esteem.

The older generation on the other hand, seems to still carrying the baggage of old Indian high power distance culture. The results indicate that they seem to be more passive and less confident. The older generation, may typically prefer to resort to "avoid confrontation mode" when confronted with an offensive or insulting person. It could be inferred from the results that they would rather avoid direct confrontation and show low resistance to yielding to save on the situation. They do not have the courage or guts to say no to work or task which is not of their liking. Subsequently, many people from the older generation agree that they will not be able to muster courage to articulate or put forward their opinion especially if they know it is against the popular view. This could be attributed to the fact that since they have emerged from the collectivistic culture where people are generally taught and advised

to suppress their true and real expressions and hide their angry feelings when in public. They are perhaps afraid that the support they seek may be denied or they fear their seniors or powerful ones may reprimand or feel offended by approaching them. During their upbringing, they are seen to be highly susceptible to social pressure from their parents, close relatives and the society to be good and respectful to others especially the seniors in age or position. Thus, it is their cultural perceptions and expectations that monitors their desire with which they seek to avoid these situations. However, surprisingly, there is one similarity reported between the New Millennials and the Older generation that they both display similar response behavior as customers in a shop or in a restaurant. They would both not hesitate in expressing their displeasure when not satisfied with the service or the product. This could be interpreted as perhaps the Older generation feels more comfortable in voicing their opinions in non-threatening or neutral social situations where as they find it difficult to cope with stressful or competitive interpersonal situations.

It is also implied that women in India are less assertive as compared to men.

From the results given above, it is also implied that women in India are less assertive as compared to men. Women will be more compromising and accommodative than men when caught in some conflict situation. They may take a back seat than confront the person with injus-

tice or inequality meted out to them. They would prefer to seal their lips than voice their views in public. This lends support to the theory of social constructionism which highlights that gender inequality exists in the form of socially constructed, predefined gender roles which are firmly anchored in India's sociocultural fabric that has deep cultural and historical roots. It used to be and continues to be in practice in some parts of India where men enjoy certain privileges and women are delegated to secondary position. Also, there are many dos and don'ts prescribed for women as they cannot raise their voice before men especially before the elders of the family. They have to follow certain code of conduct; adhere to a strict level of decency, when it comes to dressing up or speaking up.

Conclusions

It is evident from the outcome of this study that there exists a clear chasm between the older generation, the women and the New Millennials when it comes to their interpersonal assertive communication skills. This proves that some shift in belief system has taken place that results in the radical departure of the New Millennials from their immediate predecessors in relation to their interpersonal communication skills. They have evolved from a socio-economic culture that makes them different from generations before them. They are more assertive, honest, optimistic, independent and forthright as compared to older generation. They do not practice or subscribe to the inconsistent communication behavior, their predecessors are associated with.

Their communication behavior is driven more by their own personal convictions and belief system than being conformist.

Their communication behavior is driven more by their own personal convictions and belief system than being conformist. They do not change their interpersonal communication behavior because of certain social or cultural norms. They are not ready to change their identity whatever may be the configuration of social or other cultural frames. They are what they are under all situations unlike their predecessors. These findings are substantiated by other studies (Carolyn A. Martin, 2005; Carina & Sue, 2010; Howe & Strauss, 2000; Sue Shaw, 2010; Alsop, 2008). Older women are found to be less assertive and less vocal compared to men in their communication behavior though, younger women like to assert themselves wherever the situation demands. This finding is supported by other studies like Devanesan and Saral (2016) and Parray and kumar (2016).

Theoretical & Managerial Implications

The outcome of this study could be justified by taking the support of the following theories including communication accommodation theory as developed by Giles & Ogay (2007) that concerns: (1) the behavioral changes that people make to attune their communication to their partner, and (2) the extent to which people perceive their partner as appropriately attuning to them. The results do

indicate the older generation and the women in India when they feel powerless and or up against some toxic personality would often try to adjust or accommodate their communication styles to others for social approval. Similarly, Bandura's (1977) social learning theory posits that human behavior can be shaped by continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioral and environmental influences. Thus, the change in behavior amongst the New Millennials in India could be traced to the change in the socio-economic and cultural environment in India from which they have emerged. Albeit, the findings of the current study could be traced to these two theories which are rooted in western thought, but there is need to study these outcomes beyond the scope of these two theories as it restricts the reader from having a correct assessment of the reality. According to Sinha (1980), the behavioral pattern especially, of the older generation and the women in India who appear to be diffident, shy and more accommodating in one situation may appear to be the opposite of this under different circumstances. The same set of individuals may appear to be more confident and more assertive in a new set up. They do not consistently have one identifiable behavior. "The discrepant thoughts, feelings and behavior of Indians have their source in the way Indian construe a situation and respond to it" (Sinha, 1980:48; Hughes, 2002). Sinha (1980:47), attributes it to "the joint function of the diversity in the components of the Indian mind-set and the high context sensitivity of Indians", which implies that the Indians are flexible and they change or ma-

oeuvre a new configuration of thoughts, feelings and actions as the context changes. He, further explains that the Indian mindset which is the amalgamation of “different values, beliefs, norms, and action” (drawn from the influence of different cultures) and their “high context sensitivity determines which of the diverse components should be configured to respond effectively to specific contexts. Indians are propelled not so much by internally driven personality dispositions than by the compelling contextual demands. They behave differently in different contexts with different persons and with the same persons at the same place, but at different points in time” (Sinha, 1980: 47). “Indians are reported to be capable of living simultaneously and effortlessly on two mutually opposed planes and can make quantum leap from one epoch to another without showing any strain’ (Varma, 2004:143). Thus these theories together throw some light on the fact that the older men and women in India have diverse mindsets which respond to different stimuli differently depending upon their perception of the situation while as the New Millennials like their counterparts in the West, are honest and straightforward in their conduct and avoid being discrepant.

The outcome of the study should benefit the Indian corporate, specially, by having an understanding of the dynamics of the generational differences in interpersonal assertive communication behavior as it will help them channelize and manage the diversity accordingly and to their advantage. Further, it should sensitize them and make them recognize the

importance of assertiveness in maintaining equitable relationships in a culture of high-power distancing. The findings may also provide important guidelines and insights to various organizations in this globalized world.

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Appendix 1

Questionnaire on Interpersonal Assertive Communication

The attached scale consists of 09 statements. Against each statement, there are four response category namely,

- Frequently
- Sometimes
- Few Times
- Never

Please read each statement carefully and put a tick mark () the one answer that best corresponds to your agreement and disagreement.

Please do not leave any item unmarked. You may kindly be assured that this information will be used only for research purpose and the same will remain confidential.

SNO	Item	Frequently	Sometimes	Few Times	Never
1	I am able to speak with confidence at a difficult meeting which is charged with an uncomfortable atmosphere				
2	I can get a person to understand that he or she is being aggressive or unfair if he or she points out my failures due to a misunderstanding.				
3	I can respond to people without being aggressive when they try to upset or intimidate me by ridicule or sarcasm.				
4	If I believe someone is being abusive or annoying, I am able to denunciate it without disturbing myself.				
5	I feel it is all right to ask for what I want or to explain how I feel.				
6	I can say 'No' easily to people without feeling guilty when people ask me to do things that I do not like.				
7	I feel good when people seek my opinion which may be opposite to what they think.				
8	I do not feel shy or diffident in approaching people who are important and are invested with authority				
9	I can communicate with people with respectful tone, when I find defects in their product or service in a shop or restaurant				

Name:

Age:

Gender:

Working / Student / Not Working

Position in the company: