Generation Z: The Expectations of Citizens Become Smarter to Build A Smart City

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Abstract:

Our country is not having smart cities as compared to other countries. A smart city can change the lifestyle of people. We do not have such technologies, health facilities, proper transportation system, eco friendly as compared to other countries. Smart city should have better colleges, universities. It should have better job opportunities for generation Z and for future also. This paper is about the expectations of generation Z to become smart citizens. If citizens will become smarter, then city also become smarter. This paper is based on secondary data, and the discussion says that expectations of generation Z is about to become smarter so city will become a smart city.

Keywords: Smart City , Generation Z, Expectations of Generation Z.

I. Introduction

The first question is what is meant by a 'smart city'. The answer is, there is no universally accepted definition of a smart city. It means different things to different people. The conceptualization of Smart City, therefore, varies from city to city and country to country, depending on the level of development, willingness to change and reform, resources and aspirations of the city residents. A smart city would have a different connotation in India . Even in India, there is no one way of defining a smart city.

Some definitional boundaries are required to guide cities in the Mission. In the imagination of any city dweller in India, the picture of a smart city contains a wish list that describes his or her level of aspiration. To provide for the aspirations and needs of the citizens, urban planners ideally aim at developing the entire urban eco-system, which is represented by the four pillars of comprehensive development-institutional, physical, social and economic infrastructure. This can be a long term goal and cities can work towards developing such comprehensive infrastructure incrementally, adding on layers of 'smartness'.

II.   Generation Z

Gen Z is part of a generation that is global, social, visual and technological. They are the most connected, educated and sophisticated generation ever. They are the up-agers, with influence beyond their years. They are the tweens, the teens, the youth and young adults of our global society. They are the early adopters, the brand influencers, the social media drivers, the pop-culture leaders. They comprise nearly 2 billion people globally, and they don't just represent the future, they're creating it. Gen Z's have been born into the crisis period of terrorism, the global recession and climate change. They are predicted to spend their young adult years in a time of economic and social renewal. They are also living in an era of changing household structures, and are the students of today and university graduates, employees and consumers of tomorrow.

III.   What Generation Z wants to become smarter to build a smart city?

We categorized Generation Z i.e youth into three categories:

- Youth from upper middle class families
- Youth from middle class and lower middle class families
- Youth staying abroad

Obviously there are some common things that all the above desire, some of which are:

A stable and less corrupt government: It is too idealist to expect zero corruption and the youth of today are practical folks and not daydreamers. Moreover in my opinion we have developed a capacity to tolerate moderate levels of corruption but nowhere near the daylight robberies done in Commonwealth, 2G and 'Coalgate' scams.

More and better colleges and universities: This not only refers to more seats for higher education but also better quality of education as compared to no-name fly-by-the-night private operators mushrooming all over the country, charging lakhs in under-the-table fees from students who fail to clear the entrance exams at national/state levels. A few changes in some archaic policies by the government can do the trick but that's a topic for another day.

Government policies that bring about more job opportunities: In my opinion, barring IAS, IPS and defense services, most youngsters, even from Tier II & Tier III cites don't want to have stable and low-paying (assuming one is not corrupt) public sector jobs. This was not the case a decade ago when a good percentage of twenty somethings were more than happy to become a babu. I don't know why but the feeling of self-actualization i.e. making use of one's talents and abilities, has come to the fore in most youngsters in the country. Probably it stems from the achievements of young Indians around the globe that has inspired every young man/woman to believe that he/she can achieve anything if he/she puts his/her mind to it.

Consequently many youngsters today want jobs in private sector where meritocracy can take one to the top in quick time while others are following their hearts and even making unconventional

career choices. What they want from their government? – Industry friendly policies so that more jobs opportunities are created.

Freedom to enjoy life: Check this out – (i) One can vote at 18 years of age but needs to be 25 years old to sip alcohol (ii) One can't party beyond 11 pm in some 'cosmopolitan' cities of the country (iii) Young girls are inviting rape if they dress 'inappropriately' according to some senior police officials.

Youngsters contribute a lion's share to the GDP of the country as well to the tax coffers out of which politicians and bureaucrats draw their salaries (as well as their black money). And how do authorities reward them? By not even letting them relax after a hard day's work. Wish they would understand that in this day and age of cut-throat competition and tight deadlines, youngsters today work harder than what their parents did at this age. But no, they don't expect grown-up, working men and women to hold their drinks and can't protect them from heinous crimes but rather blame them for the same.

Freedom to love: A lot of people have the perception that 'honor killings' only happen in backward villages and not in 'progressive' big cities. Nothing could be further from the truth. Forget marriage, even holding the hand of your girlfriend can get you thrashed and your face blackened by 'moral police' in many cities in the country. This may sound shocking to the readers from Delhi and Mumbai but won't come as a surprise to youngsters from smaller cities, some of which are state capitals.

We live in stressful times where a loving partner is the only source of happiness in the lives of a lot of people. Even if that is not the case, love is a basic human emotion the expression of which is suppressed at a lot of places in our country. Nothing would make the youth happier than the freedom to love.

Not to be preached to and not to be judged: The youth today clearly have a mind of its own and has a 'papa don't preach' mentality. Also it strongly believes in 'I am what I am' motto and doesn't hate anything more than being judged by people who have done nothing worthwhile in their own lives. A typical example is the stereotypical image created by the media about youth in metros being more materialistic and self-centered while that in smaller places still having their 'value-compass' intact as their cities are yet untouched by Western influences (read Americanism). I beg to differ. Tier II & Tier III cities may not have the glitzy malls of the metros but have television and Internet that provides the same window to the world the youth in them that they do the ones in metros. Youngsters in small towns are as confident and upwardly mobile as their counterparts in Delhi, Mumbai etc.

However, as I mentioned earlier, apart from these common denominators, youth from varied backgrounds want a few different things:

Youth from upper middle class families: It has seen a comfortable lifestyle in its childhood and grew during a time when it was becoming socially acceptable to flaunt and celebrate money. Most of these youngsters have a safety net in case they fail to make something out of their lives.

The same ranges from a degree from abroad to a thriving family business to a donation seat in a private college. Unfortunately a lot (but NOT all) of youngsters from such backgrounds are pseudo-elites and want many things to remain status quo. They are not as vocal opposers of babudom and graft as the two categories mentioned below.

Youth from middle class and lower middle class families: For a lot of youngsters coming from middle and lower middle class families in India, a good job is the only way to a happy and secure future. The path to this Holy Grail goes through high marks and rigorous entrance exams that require years of slogging. Needless to say, more number of seats in quality institutions and a robust economy would be at the top of their wish list.

Youth staying abroad: I know so many people residing in India who will break into aggressive India-bashing at the slightest opportunity to do so. I wish all of them get a chance to spend a few years abroad as it is only then one can truly appreciate the positive aspects of our country. I would stick my neck out and say that on a percentage basis, youth staying abroad is more patriotic than the one in India. It is doing its bit to get India her rightful place in the world and the results are showing – the top management of almost all global banks as well as many Fortune 500 companies consists of Indians. The government recently implored the NRI community to stem the depreciation of the Indian Rupee by way of remittances. A large percentage of angel investors in Indian start-ups are Indians staying abroad.

The average Indian youngster outside India feels very proud of his/her roots and can pick a fight to defend the country when misinformed foreigners make loose remarks. All he/she wants is to play a bigger role in the development of the country by way of voting rights and inclusiveness in policy decisions. A stronger passport i.e. one that doesn't require a visa for every damn country on the planet shall also help. I am sure most people who travel often shall agree.

IV. Conclusion

In conclusion, I don't think it would be wrong to say that most educated youngsters in the country feel completely out of sync with the political conditions in the country. They are practical, intelligent, confident and in a hurry and can't understand the vote bank politicians played by seventy something politicians who are doing a great job in alienating the youth. The country desperately needs a political youth icon. Any politician talking about transparency, policies, growth and progress and following these words with action will have the youth of this country behind him/her. I hope somebody is listening – for the sake of the youth and for the sake of this country.

References

http://smartcities.gov.in/content/innerpage/what-is-smart-city.php