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# THIRD CONCEPT

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- ❖ **Indo-US Nuclear Deal and the Question of China's Influence**
- ❖ **Geopolitical Strategies of India, Southeast Asia and Act East Policy**
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## Gen Z and General Elections

World's largest democracy is on its way to world's largest electoral exercise. Numbers of factors are going to determine the fate of political parties, including the Gen Z (first time voters). Generation X (Gen X) were those born after World War II 'Baby Boom' i.e., during 1965 to 1980. Subsequently, Millennials (also known as Generation Y) were born during 1981 to 1996. Gen Y are called as 'Echo Boomers' for high birth rate during the period exceeding the 'Baby Boom' period after World War II. Generation Z (Gen Z or Zoomers) is the generation after Millennials and before Generation Alpha, i.e., those born during 1997 to 2012. Most of them are said to have interface with digital technology at very young age and are well versed with internet and social media. Mostly, they are the children of Gen X. Generation Alpha starts at 2013 and ends in around 2025. Generation Alpha, are mostly the children of Millennials, and waiting to be voters.

Almost all Gen X, Y, and Z are voters in the 2024 elections. Millennials were the determining factors in 2014 and 2019 General Elections and Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) is said to have capitalized on their vote both for Lok Sabha and later for many of the State Assemblies. 2024 Lok Sabha election has identified Gen Z, who was born before March or April 2006 as first time voters. They are nearly 18 million (1.8 crores in the 18-19 age bracket) being addressed as Gen Z in the media. They are being described as 'snowflake', 'hypersensitive', 'fragile', and 'woke' in the West and in India too they almost exhibit the same pattern. Gen Z is a generation in India largely groomed by TV hype, Whatsapp and Facebook University. Many of them are on Instagram and 'X' but mostly reactive than active.

Majority of the 96.88 crores voters of 2024 are fed up of lies, counter-lies, spin-doctoring, false promises, rhetoric, mud-slinging and propaganda which are mostly below par. There seems to be serious lack of trust which manifested itself in lower turn-out of voters on the polling booths during first and second phase of the seven-phase general elections of 2024. There is hardly any innovation in campaigning which could woo the voters and redeem them of their fatigue. Claims and counter-claims of parties regarding dynasty politics, minority appeasement, competitive corruption, and rhetorical promises especially about 'job creation' are writ large on the face of most political parties. Gen Z is not completely oblivion of such trends in Indian politics. Yet, they are floating votes for most of the mainstream political parties.

Almost all political parties are trying to influence the Gen Z in their favor. Accordingly, issues like unemployment, education, governance, inclusiveness, climate change, mental health, religious tensions, inflation, casteism, communalism, and social media regulations are being considered by them as more emotive than anything else as political leaders of different parties approaches them. Gen Z is exposed to internet, smartphones, and social media, whether they belong to urban or rural areas; upper, lower, middle class, neo-middle class or low income groups. Reportedly they live in the world of binaries: good or bad; exciting or boring; ecstatic or suicidal being completely oblivion of huge middle or the golden middle path.

Zoomers are sensitive to gender issues, environment, clean politics, innovation, start-ups, digitization and jobs. Hence, these are crucial issues that the party that aspires for political power will have to address. Accordingly, political parties are endeavoring to communicate with them through more images than words (memes, videos, reels). They are more in the virtual platforms like YouTube, Instagram, 'X' and Facebook than in the physical space. They are scared of crowds and the physical space. Hence, parties need to be tech savvy to lure the Zoomers not only to the 'polling stations' but also to be on their side. Fact remains, even though they are scattered across different constituencies of the country; they are for sure going to turn out on polling stations. Hence, are sure to be decisive in the 18th General Elections of the country.

— BK



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