Comparative Study to Understand Religiosity between Millennials and Gen z in India

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ABSTRACT

The present study tries to quantitatively understand the religiosity among the millennials and Gen Z population in India. As per the current scenario there is a worldwide decrease in religiosity or religious affiliation among millennials and Gen Y. This paper tries to understand this trend among Indian millennials and the Gen Z population. Religion being a sensitive and merely studied concept in the country this research gives a novel and brief outlook of this concept. For the research N=140 participants (37 males, 103 females), comprising of Millennials (n=70) and Gen Z (n=70) willingly gave their consent to be a part of the study. The paper analyses the five dimensions of religiosity among participants using The Centrality of Religiosity Scale (Huber & Huber, 2012). In addition to generation change, the study also tries to understand the impact of, gender difference, profession, and, domicile on religiosity. Findings state that religiosity between millennials and gen z do not differ from each other.

Key words: Religiosity, millennials, Gen z, Indian population

Introduction

Indian psychology is an early discipline, in spite of the fact that it has a set of experiences that goes back numerous centuries. It contrasts from Western discipline research both in its topic and its philosophy. Though Western psychology at present is as yet secured in a material perspective and administered by a reductionist worldview, Indian brain research is established on the supremacy of awareness as uncovered by profound encounters and upheld by rationale and thinking. Mainstream Western psychology has yet to recognize and accept the spiritual dimension of human nature, though transpersonal psychology emerged in the West fifty years ago. Indian psychology has the potential to enlarge the scope of modern psychology, and Indian psychological thought has universal significance.

Religion describes the beliefs, values, and practices related to sacred or spiritual concerns. Social theorist Émile Durkheim defined religion in The Elementary Forms of Religious Life (1912) defined religion as a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, i.e., things set apart and forbidden—beliefs and practices which unite in one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them - a "unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things" (Durkheim,1915). He in. The term religion originated from the Latin *religio* (respect for what is sacred) and *religare* (to bind, in the sense of an obligation), the term religion describes various systems of belief and practice concerning what people determine to be sacred or spiritual (Durkheim 1915; Fasching and deChant 2001). To him, sacred meant extraordinary—something that inspired wonder and that seemed connected to the concept of "the divine." Durkheim argued that "religion happens" in society when there is a separation between the profane (ordinary life) and the sacred (1915). Max Weber (1905) accepted religion could be a power for social change. Karl Marx (1844) saw religion as an apparatus utilized by entrepreneur social orders to propagate disparity. Religion is a social organization, since it incorporates convictions and practices that serve the requirements of society. Religion is additionally an illustration of a social all inclusive, in light of the fact that it is found in all social orders in some structure. Functionalism, struggle hypothesis, and interactionism all give important approaches to sociologists to get religion. To Freud "Religion is an attempt to master the sensory world in which we are situated by means of the wishful world which we have developed within us as a result of biological and psychological necessities. If we attempt to assign the place of religion in the evolution of mankind, it appears not as a permanent acquisition but as a counterpart to the neurosis which individual civilized men have to go through in their passage from childhood to maturity."(*INTRODUCTORY LECTURES ON PSYCHO-ANALYSIS*, 1916)

Religion has always been a sensitive topic in the country. India is a nation where biggest number of strict factions, groups, and types exist, and around 330 million divine beings and goddesses are revered in various structures. Aside from principle religions like Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, and Christianity, there are a couple of neo-religions and neo-divine beings who have incredible impact in the Indian masses. Embracing around 440 million individuals, about 83.4% of the all-out populace, Hinduism has steadily shown an ability to blend contending beliefs into its umbrella, including monist, monotheists, polytheists, polytheists, animists, totomists, freethinkers, and even agnostics. Separated from Hinduism, Buddhism (3 million), Jainism (2 million), Christianity (13 million), Sikhism (9 million), and

Islam (85 million) do have huge impact over the Indian style of life. Any individual who needs to consider the social, sociological, recorded, political, and different parts of Indian life and individuals should comprehend the assortments of Indian religion.(Naeem & Asghar, 2014). In this study we consider religiosity as a dependent variable which can is influenced by numerous aspects of human life.(Davidson, 1972). This paper is prosed to understand how the effect of changing generations in India, and the effect of the existing religious faith(religiosity) on millennials (Gen Y) and Gen Z.

Theorical understanding

According to the Structural-Functional approach developed by Emile Durkheim, he proposed that the religion has three major functions in the society: it provides social cohesion to help maintain social solidarity through shared rituals and beliefs, social control to enforce religious based morals and norms to help maintain conformity and control in society, and it offers meaning and purpose to answer any existential questions. Also, he argued that religion is very real and it the expression of the society itself, indeed there will be no society that does not have a religion. He also stresses on the point that religion is an expression of collective consciousness, which is the fusion of all our individual consciousness which then creates a reality of its own (Durkheim, 1915).

But according to Freud, religion was an 'illusion', a form of neurosis, and even an attempt to gain control over external world. In the book "The Future of an Illusion", he wrote that- "religion is comparable to a childhood neurosis"(Freud, n.d.). In his psychoanalytic perspective
-religion is viewed as the unconscious mind's need for fulfilment. Because people need to feel secure and absolute themselves of their own guilt, he believed that they choose to believe in god, who represents a powerful father figure (*INTRODUCTORY LECTURES ON PSYCHO- ANALYSIS*, 1916).

Describing generations

Millennials, or members of Generation Y (also known as Gen Y) were born between 1982 and

2000, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. The Census Bureau estimates that there are 83.1 million millennials in the U.S., and the Pew Research Center found that millennials surpassed baby boomers (boomers) to become the largest living generation in the United States in 2016. Millennials are separated from the older generation before them (Generation X) and the generation that followed them (Generation Z). As expected by their birth years, the Millennial generation makes up the fastest growing segment of the workforce. As companies compete for

available talent, employers simply cannot ignore the needs, desires, and attitudes of this vast generation. As with each generation that preceded it, Millennials have come to be defined by a set of characteristics formed mainly by the world and culture they grew up in.

Generation Z (aka Gen Z, iGen, or centennials), refers to the generation that was born between 1997-2012, following millennials. Post-millennials or generation-Z refers to the population born between 1995 and 2010(Hassan & Kodwani, 2020). This generation has been raised on the internet and social media, with some of the oldest finishing college by 2020 and entering the workforce.

Religion and society

Today's current world Religion seems to be dying. The millennials and the Gen z claim to the generations of free speech, free love and acceptance. Both the generations are now shying away from religion, for which we still need to find an answer. The research paper Millennials leaving religion found that -religious disaffiliates inherited their childhood religion, contradictory experiences highlighted a need to disaffiliate, soon they stopped all religious practices, in that way they were able to connect to their authentic self, some experienced negative connotations of religion, finally families accepted disaffiliation after that occurred(Rainwater, 2019).

Religiosity in India

When religiosity among millennials and Gen Z around the world is reducing globally in India it seems to be growing more than ever. According to new Pew Research Center report it has found that in recent year, the size of the major and minor religious communities to have grown substantially since 1950 so is the religiosity among Indians. The Pew research centre's results findings state that Indians value religious tolerance, thought they also live religiously segregated lives. It says that they have religious freedom and claims that respecting all religions is very important to being 'truly Indian', respecting other religion is very important part to their religious identity, and they are free to practice any religion. Researches have already found that more than half of India's youth care about religion and this religiosity increases with age. (YouGov-Mint Millennial survey, 2019). In a country of diversity, the fights and tensions between the 'majority' and 'minority' communities are still a threat to state's solidarity. Communal riots have always been a part of India before and after partition. Even during the

21st century communal riots still continues but with different names and faces.

So, the fundamental reason for the proposal of this research is to bridge the gap between the existing understanding about religiosity in society and communal violence in the country.

An existing understanding is that one can view religion and religiosity as cause for all the violence that's happened and are happening in the country. Or, can try to understand that it's the people's misunderstanding about the actual role of religion that leads to violence.

Review of literature

Religiosity is found to be beneficial for work-life balance for youth and it can moderate the relationship between job demands and work-to-life conflicts, and work hours and work-to-life conflict, but not between work flexibility and work/life facilitation, and family demands and life-to-work conflict.(Sav, 2016). Learning religion is not just about understanding value; but also implement it in everyday life.(Narulita et al., 2019). Millennials have distinctive characteristics that may make interacting with them different from with previous cohorts, but each modern generation has arrived in the workplace with its own unique set of qualities.(Noble

& Schewe, 2003). Millennials have their own perspectives and behaviours which are viewed as obstacles than as opportunities.(Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010). According to pew research centre, millennials who have earned reputation for reshaping industries and institutions are moving out of religious affiliations. It stated that "four in ten million now say they are religiously unaffiliated". In another study the finding showed that most Spanish youngsters do not consider religion as an integral part either to their well-being or to give a sense of meaning to their own lives.(Casas et al., 2009). Religiosity has had its effect on adults in almost all the fields. Religiosity has a "spill-over" effect among adults in terms of politics, but it does not have a similar effect among adolescents. Maria-Cristina (2016) found that generation Z has a perception of the ideal workplace and working conditions, the main priorities in selecting a job and its career expectations and aspirations.

Gen Z consumption of religious messages is very much visual-based – and in many ways marked the return of secondary orality -- hence limited to the more intellectual affirmation mode of expression induced mainly by traditional religious discourse. Through outlets such as YouTube, Instagram, and in particular TikTok instrumental in this process. In terms of environmental challenges, injustice, and racism, Millennials and Generation Z believe the world is at a crossroads.(Epafras et al., 2021) They hold themselves and institutions accountable in order to create a society that is more sustainable and equitable.(*2021 Millennial and Gen Z Survey*, 2021).

According to 2021 Millennial and Gen Z Survey- Millennials' top concerns during the pandemic were health care and unemployment. However, the environment remained a top priority for both millennials and Gen Z s (#3 for millennials and #1 for Gen Zs). After the pandemic, 40% expect that more individuals will pledge to take action on environmental issues. However, 60 percent believe that as business executives deal with the issues posed by the pandemic, their commitment to helping tackle climate change will become less of a priority. Discrimination is rampant, according to Millennials and Generation Z. More than half of Indian millennials and almost half of Gen Z s believe they are discriminated against on/by various platforms on a regular basis or frequently because of some aspect of their origins. Concerns about income, family welfare, and employment prospects all contribute to high stress levels. Almost half of Gen Zs and millennials stated they are stressed all of the time or most of the time, which is significantly higher than the global average. Aside from health, financial security, family well-being, and work security are all elements that contribute to stress. Workplace stress and anxiety are common, and businesses' efforts are being highlighted. A third of those polled (millennials 31 percent, Gen Z 35 percent) claimed they had taken time from work due to the pandemic's worry. Surprisingly, more than 75% of Indian millennials claim they have openly discussed stress with their parents. Also, a much smaller percentage disagrees that their employer has taken immediate action to help their mental health or that their firm is developing plans for the future.

Method

The main intension of this study to compare and analyse the difference in level of religiosity among Indian millennials and Gen Z population. So, we assume that there is no significant difference between the religiosity present among Indian millennials and Gen Z individuals. It's done in two phases, first phase data is collected from the population via online mode, and, second phase data is analyses.

Sample

The sample of present study comprised N= 140 (37 males, 103 females) participants including millennials (n=70) and Gen Z (n=70) from different states of Indian, particularly from Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, including both students and professionals working in various fields. The sample was collected by convenient sampling technique with no restriction of gender, age, domicile or economic status.

Measure/ Tool

In this study, the religiosity scale was measured with the Centrality of Religiosity Scale -CRS-15 (Huber & Huber, 2012), which is based on a multidimensional and interreligious model of religiosity (Huber 2003). The CRS-15 has 15 items and consists of 5 dimensions, namely intellect, ideology, public practice, private practice, and religious experience. The response of this scale uses a Likert scale with a range of five points (the Indian adaptation of scale). The scale assesses two aspects (1) Frequency and (2) Importance. The intellectual dimensions contain 3 items (1, 6, 11), ideology comprise of 3 items (2, 7, 12), dimensions of public practice practices contain 3 items (3, 8, 13), private practice contain 3 items (4, 9, 14), religious experience having 3 items (5, 10, 15), and when all dimension summed up together it indicates about whole religiosity level of individual. The reliability range of CRS was (α=0.73 to 0.83).

Construct validity

The validity of this measurement strategy was confirmed empirically. There are very high correlations between the CRS and self-reports of the salience of the religious identity, which are traditionally applied as one item scales for religiosity. They amount to 0.83 in a student's

'sample and 0.73 in the international Religion Monitor. Furthermore, there are also high correlations between CRS values and self-reports of the importance of religion for daily life, with coefficients of 0.78 in a student's 'sample and 0.67 in the international Religion Monitor. (Huber & Huber, 2012)

Versions of Scale

The centrality scale is available in different versions (German- original versions; versions in

19 languages are available). All versions operationalize the before mentioned five core dimensions (**intellectual dimension, ideology, public practice, private practice and religious experience**) on a most general level with items that measure either the objective or subjective frequency, or the intensity of the activation of personal religious constructs specific to the modification of the dimensions- These items consider religious practice which in most religions' traditions are undertaken regularly and are easily accessible in frequency format. For events that may occur less regularly, subjective frequencies were asked in five levels (never, rarely, occasionally, often, and very often). The different frequency formats require the recoding of the objective frequencies into the five levels of the subjective. For items where frequencies have little meaning as e.g., the belief in something divine, its intensity or

importance is assessed in five levels (not at all, not very much, moderately, quite a bit, and very much so). The scale was originally developed to measure religiosity in the context of the Abrahamitic tradition with a monotheistic concept of God (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam). Later in surveys with Buddhists, Hindus, and Muslims, specific modifications of the CRS were developed. Available versions are CRS-5, CRS-10, CRS-15, CRSi-7, CRSi-14 and CRSi-20.

Ethical consideration

This study follows some ethical considerations to proceed the study as follows, (i) The information about the participants will be anonymous and confidential, (ii) The data will be stored in a security computer, (iii) It is not accessed to other persons except the researchers, (iv) There will be no deception in the study, (v) There will be no harm to the participants while involving in this study, (vi) Informed consent from the participants and (vii) Confidentiality will be maintained.

Inclusion Criteria

The inclusion criteria of the study as follows (i) Millennials belonging to 25-40 years-of-age
(ii) Gen Z belonging to 15-24

Exclusion Criteria

The exclusion criteria of the study as follows (i) Individuals above 40 years-of-age (ii) Individuals below 15 years of age, due to consent issues.

Hypothesis

There two hypotheses in this study as follows

I.   H0: There is no significant difference between religiosity between millennials and gen z.
II.   H1: Yes, there is difference between religiosity between millennials and gen z.

Procedure & Statistical analysis

The collection of data was done through online mode. First step was to take all necessary ethical measures into consideration. Before directly going to administer the scale, informed consent was signed from participants to ensure their readiness for participation in research. After data

collection and scoring, the analysis was done using SPSS version 26. The Shapiro Wilk test was administered on the dependent variable to check its normality among the population. Once that was proved the independent sample t-test (parametric test) was administered to compare

both means of each sample separately.

Results

In total 140 Indians (Gen Z=70; Millennials =70) participated in the test- 26% were male and

74 % were females, 75% belong to Urban domicile and 25% from Rural domicile. Gen Z- male average mean value=1, female average mean value=2, Millennials- male average mean value=4.40, female=3.60.

Table1. Independent sample T-Test Between CRS Scores of Millennials and Gen Z

	Millennials		Gen Z		
	M	SD	M	SD	t-test
CRS Scores	3.5457	.75598	3.7776	.72665	-1.850

***p> 0.05

Note. M= Mean. SD= Standard Deviation

Table 1 presents the group statistics of the participants. the CRS mean value for gen z is M= 3.5457 (SD=.75), CRS mean value for millennials is 3.7776 (SD=.72665). Comparing means of two samples, df =138 and 137.785 corresponding (t value < cv), Sig. (z-tailed) slightly greater than 0.05 (0.066>0.05) therefore, null hypothesis accepted.

Discussion

This was a comparative study to understand religiosity among our two samples- gen z and millennials. The male participants belonging to millennials and gen z contradicted each other by one group being highly religious and other being non-religious. We can't directly assume any reason as there only few male participants. Females from both groups appeared to be (moderately) religious. This can be resulted due the role gender play in shaping their gender roles. Individuals belonging to Gen Z and millennial population did not differ from each in terms of 'religiosity.' (From Table 2). This can be due of the inevitable role played by religion in almost all aspects of an Indian's life. A life of an Indian citizens is assumed to be bound by family religious traditions, religious festivals, ceremonies etc. Thus, we can assume that moving out of religion as seen in the west and most part of the world is thus presumed to be difficult in India. But we can also assume that religious affiliation as the reason for religious/communal issues going on the country. Being a country

with diverse religions and cultures a communal violence

is more likely when one individual or group of individuals belonging to one religious group feels offended by another individual or group of individuals of belonging another religion.

Implication

Since religion is a sensitive topic and due to the lack of measuring tools this concept which has multiple factors associated with it is much less studied than it should be. Attitude of people suffering from chronic illnesses and religiosity regarding curing is something that can be studied and analysed. Similarly, a population-based study can be done to understand people's attitude towards communal violence among Indians or any other region.

Also, schools both government and public can give awareness programmes regarding based on secularism and not about one particular religion where they are taught about the core value of each religion which are more or less similar. Organisations run by any particular religious community can be asked to ensure that the institution does not make students or staffs to engage in religious practices forcefully. Any such forceful acts must be made punishable.

Limitation

There were a few methodological limitations such as difficulty in finding appropriate sample. Like reaching out to sample during the period of COVID-19 was difficult. Since data collection was done in online mode there experienced a difficulty to getting the participants to fill the Google forms (scale was send to then in Google-forms). Getting millennials to participate in the study and making them spare time for filling the Google forms was a hard. The lack of enthusiasm and cooperation from the side of participants was experienced. Study faced all the limitation that an online mode data collection method would face. There was lack of research articles about Indian millennials and gen z population. Research papers about religion in India was less. The study on Indian population was only limited to southern states I regret not being able to include participants from other states. Being limited to one measuring scale was another limitation of the study. Lack of resources regarding the variables is another limitation. Couldn't analyse the relation between occupation and religiosity due lack of time.

Conclusion

Knowing and learning about religion and religiosity is vital especially in a country like India. It is a vast topic that need to be continuously studied. It's a subjective concept for which different people may different degree of attachment with. Comparing the religiosity is essential as to understand the changings generation's perspective about religion. Finally, from the study we conclude that both millennials and generation Z are

equally religious. The importance of ensuring the changing generations knows the core principles of religions than seeing it from

surface level so that we might be able to minimize riots and violence related to religion.

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