

Cultural Change, Generation Gap, and Institutional Interventions: A Study of Youth in Himachal Pradesh

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of cultural shifts on the perspectives and resulting deviant inclinations of youth aged 15 to 24 enrolled in educational institutions in Himachal Pradesh. This research aims to understand how the changing cultural landscape influences the attitudes, behaviors, and norms of young people, and to identify the factors that contribute to deviations from traditional social norms. Using a multistage random sampling technique to select 450 young people for the research population is a sound approach to ensure a representative sample. The result showed that youth with lesser faith in institutions exhibited more deviant tendencies. Also, higher levels of parental education correlated with a greater positive inclination of youth towards modern values. Further, a greater divide between younger and older generations in terms of accepting modernity was associated with increased deviant tendencies among youth. The varying educational backgrounds of parents had the most significant impact on the attitudinal modernity of youth, underscoring the role of education in influencing beliefs and behaviors. This study highlights the intricate relationships between institutional trust, parental education, generational attitudes, and youth behavior. The core findings of this study and their broader implications provide a clear basis for policy recommendations that can serve as a foundation for developing a comprehensive youth policy aimed at fostering true holistic development and provide valuable insights for further research.

KEY WORDS: Generation gap, modernity, faith, deviance, institution.

I. INTRODUCTION

India is an emerging nation undergoing rapid social and psychological transformation, a hallmark of the modernization process. Modernization is psychologically defined as a positive shift in values, attitudes, and beliefs. Within a traditional culture, younger generations tend to adopt contemporary attitudes and beliefs, while older generations oppose change and largely remain rooted in tradition. This leads to disparities in attitudes of the two generations and gives rise to conflict in society. Many distinguished sociologists like D.P. Mukerji (1958) and

Yogendra Singh (1994) have shown the dialectics of tradition and modernity in Indian society due to forces of social change leased by the processes of westernization, modernization, and, later, since the 1990s of globalization. Such transformations have brought unprecedented socio-cultural changes in recent years, particularly those related to new information and communication technology impacting the youth in a significant way.

The state of Himachal Pradesh, with a population of approximately 7 million (as per the 2011 census), is administratively divided into three divisions comprising twelve districts. Due to advancements in technology, the state is experiencing noticeable cultural changes, particularly among its youth. These changes are reflected in various aspects of modernity that have given more freedom and flexibility to the youth leading to increasing incidents of intimate relationships, breakups, night outs, truanting/bunking off classes, and other related issues. As shown in this paper, such situations have led to more uncertainty, distress, and deviance among the youth.

There is a significant difference between younger generations (digital natives) who have grown up with technology and older generations (digital immigrants) who have adapted to it later in life. Studies show that digital natives are more comfortable with technology and are quicker to adopt new digital practices. Prensky distinguishes between "Digital Natives," who are born into the digital world and are naturally adept at using technology, and "Digital Immigrants," who have had to adapt to new technologies later in life. The work explores how these differing backgrounds impact learning and communication styles (Prensky, 2001). However, the Technology has altered communication styles, with younger generations preferring instant messaging and social media, while older generations often rely on traditional forms of communication. Settersten and Ray (2010) explore the changing trajectories of young people as they transition into adulthood, discussing how social, economic, and cultural shifts have altered traditional pathways and expectations. They analyze the extended and often complex journey young people face today compared to previous generations (Smith & Duggan, 2013)

With regard to social and cultural values, younger generations often embrace progressive values related to gender equality, diversity, and individualism, while older generations may hold more traditional views (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). Research shows that generational gaps in values influence family relationships, including attitudes towards marriage, parenting, and aging (Settersten & Ray, 2010).

In *Delinquent Boys: The Culture of the Gang* (1955), Cohen combined these many strategies. In his broad explanation of subcultures, Cohen argued that when people experience comparable social situations, they are more likely to hold similar ideas. He claims that juvenile offenders frequently lack the resources to advance in society in the expected ways, so they create organizations (gangs) that go against established mores.

Initiatives that promote intergenerational dialogue and understanding can help bridge the gap, such as mentorship programs and collaborative projects (Bucx, 2011). Further, Training programs that enhance digital literacy for older generations can improve their interaction with technology and reduce generational divides (Helsper, 2012).

For the French Sociologist Émile Durkheim (1893), deviance is a necessary component of a successful society and serves three purposes: (1) it makes norms more clear and promotes conformity; (2) it strengthens social bonds among those who react negatively to the deviant; and (3) it may promote positive social change and challenges people's presumptions. Understanding a social fact within the framework of the society in which it exists is what makes it normal, according to Durkheim (1950: 64). A social fact, he continues, is 'normal' because it serves the interests of that particular societal type and is hence 'universal' to that particular type of society. Even 'crime,' which otherwise is an unacceptable feature in society, becomes 'normal' because when punished, it restores order and prevents others from committing crimes. His work emphasizes the importance of social norms, the inevitability of deviance, and the role of collective conscience in maintaining social order. It shows that it is important to have mechanisms like sound policies and measures in place to check the emerging deviance among the youth in the rapidly changing scenario.

Social media is the social interaction among the people in which they create, share, or exchange pictures, ideas, and views in virtual communities and networks. It is the use of web-based media to have an interactive dialogue. Social media is increasing democratic participation, and allowing people to keep in touch with friends, family, and communities. At the same time, social media is changing the way in which people interact with others through social networking sites. People are more connected with each other but at the same time, it is making the people more isolated and creating a new sub-culture. A couple of years ago, young people may have only been in touch with friends and peer-groups when hanging out at school or meeting up in town. Now, young people communicate through instant messaging, social networks, online games, and many other tools. Young people are growing up in a constantly connected society. Contemporary Sociologist Manuel Castells (1996) calls this 'The Network Society' formed as a result of transformation in communication technology and the spread of globalization.

Valkenburg and Peter review experimental studies examining how online communication, including social media, affects self-esteem among youth. They provide insights into both positive and negative impacts, highlighting the complex relationship between social media use and adolescent development, Valkenburg, P. M., & Peter, J. (2011). Whereas, Kiesling explores how generational differences influence perceptions of deviant behavior. The study examines how shifts in values and norms between different generations impact the definition and occurrence of deviant behaviors, Kiesling, L. M. (2007).

Young people are increasingly woven together in the prevailing virtual world. But when a technology is developed, one cannot always predict how people will use it. Often young people are involved in 'technology appropriation' - taking social media tools and using them in new ways, developing and experimenting with new forms of communication using the tools available to them. The impact of social media is not equally spread across all young people. Some young people lack direct, regular access to the internet. Others may have literacy or skills issues that prevent them from participating fully in mainstream social media spaces. However, as social media brings about changes in society - it does impact all young people in some way or the other. Where young people have limited access to technology their 'digital exclusion' may add to 'social exclusion'.

Over-usage of social media can lead to a tendency of less socialization, aggression, and suicide. It can also cause narcissistic tendencies particularly Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) and anti-social behaviour in youth. For e.g., too much exposure to Facebook, as is common among youth today, makes them more prone to depression, anxiety, and other psychological disorders. The more friends one has on Facebook, the less socially adjusted he/she is. Social media allows youth to stay connected with friends and family, make new friends, share pictures, and exchange ideas. However, there is a high risk associated with the overuse of Social Media, such as inappropriate content, cyber-bullying, etc. People are constantly under the impact of Social media. The main Social networking sites nowadays are: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.

The findings of the study show that young people's faith in institutions to resolve their problems and issues has reasonably declined, and this is primarily a factor contributing to demoralization and consequent deviation. Developing resilience and implementing constructive coping strategies can help youth get through difficult circumstances as shown in this paper.

II. HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

This paper is significantly based on formulating and proving or disapproving of hypotheses, the essential component that tells about the existing condition, trend, and direction of the problem being investigated. The following fundamental hypotheses are anticipated to be confirmed during the analysis based on the study results.

HYPOTHESIS-1:

The greater the faith of the Youth in the institution, the lesser their deviance.

HYPOTHESIS-2:

The greater the divide between the younger and older generations regarding accepting modernity, more are the deviant tendencies among youth.

HYPOTHESIS-3:

The higher is the parent's education, the more is the positive inclination of youth toward modern values.

III.MATERIALS & METHODS

A. SAMPLE

The total sample for the study consisted of 450 students aged 15 to 24 years from educational institutions in Himachal Pradesh. After conducting a pilot study, it was observed from the field work that a large number of students engaged in deviant activities constituting the various prevalent aspects of modernity, namely watching pornography, truanting/playing truant classes, and break-up in love affairs, night-outs or late-night parties, being in a relationship, run-away marriage, pre-marital sexual intercourse, inter-caste marriage, and divorce and other issues incidental thereto. To have a comprehensive understanding, a suitable number of people between 50 and 60 years from three divisions were also appropriately interviewed. It captured the key findings from pilot study and field work providing a clear overview of the deviant activities observed among the students. These observations illustrate the diverse ways in which modernity is influencing youth behavior and highlight areas for further research and intervention.

B. TOOLS

In the study, a structured close-ended questionnaire was used to gather data from the respondents. A 5-point Likert Scale was developed for the questionnaire, providing respondents with options ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." The structured approach and use of a validated Likert Scale ensured that the collected data accurately reflected the respondents' perceptions and behaviors, facilitating robust analysis and insights.

C. STUDY AREA

The state of Himachal Pradesh is the most youthful state which is administratively divided into three divisions consisting of twelve districts. The biggest division of the state is Kangra, followed by Mandi and then, Shimla. Multi-stage cluster sampling was used to ensure a representative sample from the state wherein the respondents are selected proportionately from these three divisions of the state namely Kangra (160 respondents), Mandi (150 respondents) and Shimla (140 respondents), keeping in view its population and reported deviant behaviors of youth therein. Youth is systematically selected district-wise from each division of the State.

Table No.1: Gender-wise distribution of respondents

Gender	Kangra	Mandi	Shimla	Total
Male	80	75	70	225
Female	80	75	70	225
Total	160	150	140	450

IV. ANALYSIS & RESULTS

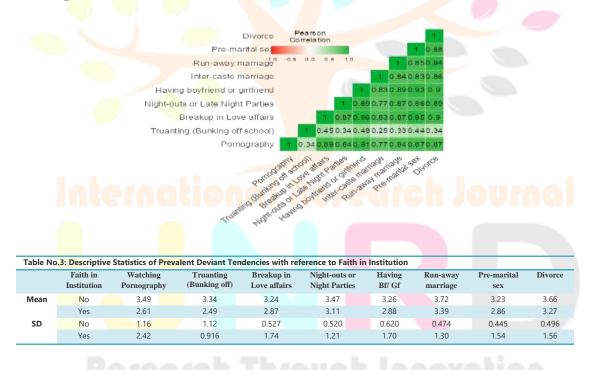
Modernity is the capacity to adapt one's mindset or way of thinking and way of life to the advances in science, technology, and the contemporary global revolution. It necessitates the shift from an autocratic traditional mindset approach toward a compassionate modern outlook. As per the statistical analysis of data, the following nine prevalent deviations, namely, watching pornography, truanting/playing truant classes, breakup in love affairs,

night-outs or late-night parties, being in a relationship, run-away marriage, pre-marital sexual intercourse, intercaste marriage, and divorce are found to be *positively* related to the perception of youth, as shown in the Table below.

Table No	Table No.2: Descriptive Statistics of Prevalent Deviant Tendencies							
	Watching	Truanting	Breakup in	Night-outs or	Relations	Run-away	Pre-marital	Divorce
	Pornography	(Bunking off Class)	Love affairs	Late Night Parties	hips	marriage	sex	
N	450	450	450	450	450	450	450	450
Mean	3.19	3.05	3.11	3.34	3.13	3.60	3.10	3.52
Median	4.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	4.00	3.00	4.00
Min.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Max.	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5

The above descriptive indicates the positive attitude of youth toward modernity in terms of aforementioned deviant tendencies coupled with the correlational heat-map which depicts the strong positive correlation's strength. The findings are supported by reliability statistics, with Cronbach's α falling within a reasonable range. This reinforces the favourable association between youth perception and prevalent deviant tendencies.

Correlation Heatmap of Prevalent Deviant Tendencies:



The findings suggest that the prevalent deviant tendencies are more widely embraced by those having either no faith or declining faith in institutions. The average value for all prevalent deviant tendencies (e.g., watching pornography, truanting, breakups, night-outs, etc.) was found to be more than three on the scale, indicating an above-average level of engagement in these behaviors. This above-average level of deviant tendencies was specifically noted among respondents who expressed no faith in the institutions. This suggests that a lack of trust or confidence in institutional frameworks correlates with higher levels of deviant behavior among

youth. The results imply that youth who lack faith in institutional systems are more likely to engage in behaviors considered deviant, highlighting the potential impact of institutional trust on youth behavior.

	Parents Qualification	Watching/ reading Pornography	Breakup in Love affairs	Nightouts	Being in relationship	Run- away marriage	Pre- marital sex	Divorce	Truanting (Bunking off classes)
Mean	Grdauate	3.24	3.08	3.32	3.12	3.64	3.09	3.52	3.03
	Matriculate	1.39	2.39	2.87	2.17	2.87	2.52	2.87	2.61
	Postgraduate	3.33	3.23	3.43	3.26	3.65	3.18	3.60	3.13
Range	Grdauate	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
	Matriculate	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	5
	Postgraduate	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	5

Youth from educated backgrounds are more exposed to diverse perspectives and critical thinking, which leads to a more open-minded or modern outlook. This can make them more accepting of behaviors or ideas that deviate from traditional norms. Youth of educated parents often exhibit more modern attitudes and are more accepting of behaviors considered deviant, compared to youth from illiterate/matriculate parents.

Table No.5: One-Way ANOVA (Fisher	's) <mark>wit</mark> h referer	nce to Pa	rents Q	ualification
	F	df1	df2	P
Pornography	13.71	2	447	<.001
Truanting (Bunking off school)	2.36	2	447	0.096
Breakup in Love affairs	6.26	2	447	0.002
Night-outs or Late Night Parties	4.87	2	447	0.008
Having boyfriend or girlfriend	9.95	2	447	< .001
Run-away marriage	9.13	2	447	< .001
Pre-marital sex	4.82	2	447	0.008
Divorce	5.45	2	447	0.005
Inter-caste marriage	7.27	2	447	< .001

As shown in the Table above, the P-value for the ANOVA is lower than the significance value of 0.05 in the study except Truanting. These values denote that the parents' educational background has a big influence on how young children perceive events differently, irrespective of gender. There are no gender-based differences observed in the study.

Table No.6: Average Response of Old and Youth respondents with reference to Prevalent Deviant Tendencies

S. No.	Aberrant Behavior	Youth (n=450)	Old (n=450)	
	and the Williams	Mean (Y)	Mean (O)	
1.	Violation of law	2.09111	1.24	
2.	Watching pornography	3.18666	1.1533	
3.	Smoking/ drug/alcohols	2.89555	1.6266	
4.	Using Violence	2.08	1.2733	
5.	Buy drugs/condoms for friends	2.86444	1.3666	
6.	Truanting(Bunking off school)	3.05333	1.06	
7.	Lying to a teacher/parents	2.8111	1.126	
8.	Implicating false allegations	1.20888	0.98	
9.	Live-in relationship	2.24888	1.053	
10.	Breakup in Love affairs	3.11333	1.146	
11.	Night-outs/Late Night Parties	3.3444	1.366	
12.	Having boyfriend or girlfriend	3.13333	1.1	
13.	Inter-caste marriage	3.2422	1.38	

14.	Run-away marriage	3.6044	1.253
15.	Pre-marital sex	3.1044	1.226
16.	Early marriage	2.48222	2.413
17.	Late marriage	2.76	1.213
18.	Divorce	3.5244	1.286
19.	Extra marital affairs	2.1977	1.166
20.	Abortion	2.8755	1.62
21.	Physical Assault	2.2955	1.306
22.	Rash Driving	2.8622	1.32
23.	Killing someone	1.51777	1.073
24.	Delayed Justice to Victim	1.2622	1.093
25.	Suicide	2.0888	1.033

Thus, the data clearly indicates that glaring difference in average response observed in the study of two sets of population i.e., youth and old, wherein, the youth are found to be more open, whereas their old generation is still conservative, leading to a generation gap. The concept of a generation gap often stems from differences in attitudes toward modernity and social change between older and younger generations. The difference in attitudes contributes to the generation gap, reflecting how evolving societal norms and modernization impact intergenerational relationships and perspectives.

A significant divide between younger and older generations in their acceptance of modernity can indeed contribute to behaviors seen as deviant by the older generation. However, these behaviors are often part of a natural process of social change and adaptation. Understanding these dynamics can help bridge generational gaps and foster more cohesive and adaptable societies.

V. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Educated parents often emphasize values like critical thinking, tolerance, and empathy, which can help their children to be more open to different viewpoints and non-conventional lifestyles. However, this is not a universal rule, and individual responses to deviance are influenced by many factors beyond parental education, such as personal experiences, cultural background, and peer influences.

It is also worth noting that acceptance of deviance does not necessarily mean endorsing or adopting all forms of deviant behavior; it can simply reflect a more nuanced understanding and less judgmental attitude toward those who engage in such behaviors. The youth from illiterate parents have limited exposure to diverse perspectives and information. They also experience more traditional and authoritarian parenting styles, which reinforce conventional norms and less acceptance of deviance.

It has been found that education significantly influences modernity. Most significantly, education shapes how people view and perceive values and lifestyles, which in turn affects the phenomena of disparities in mindsets. Using this conceptualization, the current study has experimentally demonstrated that the parents' varying educational backgrounds had the most impact on attitudinal modernity.

The generation gap significantly influences acceptance of toward modernity. Younger generations often embrace modern values, technologies, and lifestyles more readily than older generations, leading to differences in attitudes and behaviors. This divide creates friction and misunderstandings, as each generation struggles to understand or accept the other's perspective.

The larger the gap in acceptance toward modernity, the more pronounced these differences become, potentially leading to increased deviant behaviors among youth who feel disconnected from the values and norms of the older generation. These differences lead to misunderstandings and conflicts between generations, but they also present opportunities for mutual learning and growth. Recognizing and respecting each other's perspectives help bridge the gap and foster better intergenerational relationships. This is also a source of conflict in families. It is very difficult for youth to regulate their emotional quotient. The old generation is concerned about their social status and prestige. The parents oppose the youth because they misread their activities. In the present-day Indian caste-ridden orthodox society, the parents are more careful about their social status and prestige than anything else. They read in the newspapers, periodicals and electronic media every day about the cases of kidnapping, elopements, drug addictions, youth unrest etc. Therefore, taking into consideration the social bondage the parents oppose them.

It may be due to a lack of proper understanding of their own young children's character. Faith and deviance are two concepts that can have a significant relationship. When individuals have strong faith in institutions, such as educational, religious, or social systems, they are more likely to adhere to societal norms and expectations. This faith provides a sense of stability and purpose, reducing the likelihood of deviant behavior. Thus, fostering faith in institutions can be a key factor in promoting social cohesion and reducing deviance.

VI. CONCLUSION

This paper focuses on the study conducted on the 15 to 24 years of youth studying in the educational institutions of Himachal Pradesh to examine the impact of cultural transformation upon youth perception and consequent deviant tendencies. The study population consists of 450 youth, using a multi-stage random sampling method, with the following conclusions.

In view of the prevailing generation gap, addressing these issues requires a multifaceted approach, including improving educational systems, providing better mental health support, fostering positive role models, and bridging the generation gap. Cultural change through technology and material culture is impacting the minds of youth. The change is more evident in the material culture like new gadgets, smart phones, eating-out joints, wearing stylish clothes, etc. Youth spend more than four hours a day using the internet and are also concerned with their employment. For instance, bunking classes is a prevalent behavior of youth, indicating a deficiency in a conducive learning environment or lack of interest. Further, parents and teachers are no longer their role model now. The societal and educational institutions are not able to meet the requirements - educational, psychological and economic, of the Youth adequately and sufficiently. The generation-gap between the younger and the older generations is widening as modernity has impacted the youth, and elders are bound more by traditions. This has generated deviant tendencies among the youth. The cases of mental stress, depression, as well as suicidal tendencies among the Youth have increased.

VII. SUGGESTIONS

It is suggested from the given study that the Education Policy should be made more democratic, inclusive, flexible, and youth-friendly. Social institutions, in order to cater to the needs of youth, have to be more conducive to addressing the current and contemporary needs of the youth to prevent demoralization, techno-addictions, cybercrimes, hopelessness, alienation, stress and anxiety, and sometimes suicide. Policy paralysis and institutional failure are significant issues that can undermine effective governance and development. The traditional autocratic rigid approach must be set aside, to welcome the modern values as per the given circumstances and situations.

To address the contemporary challenges and promote well-being, institutions have to mend their functioning in many ways. The institutions may also have the provision of counseling and training in different aspects. Promoting critical thinking, tolerance, and empathy is indeed a powerful alternative to traditional autocratic methods. Adopting a less judgmental attitude towards individuals who engage in behavior considered deviant can significantly impact both personal interactions and broader societal dynamics. This study may be a potential vision document for prospective Youth Policy formulation

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